

LITURGICAL
SERMONETTES



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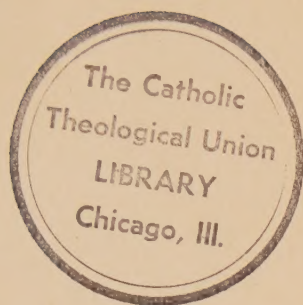


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LITURGICAL SERMONETTES

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SERMONS FOR CHILDREN'S MASS
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HOMILETIC SERMONETTES
ANECDOTE SERMONETTES
READING AND REFLECTIONS FOR THE HOLY HOUR
MOMENTS DIVINE
FLOWERS OF THE SANCTUARY
MY HAPPIEST DAY

LITURGICAL SERMONETTES

FOR CHILDREN'S MASS

ON

SUNDAYS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

BY

REV. FREDERICK A. REUTER



WITHDRAWN

B. HERDER BOOK CO.,

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TO
MY FRIEND
THE RT. REV. MSGR. JOSEPH A. WEIGAND, LL.D.
RECTOR OF ST. CHARLES COLLEGE-SEMINARY
COLUMBUS, OHIO

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INTRODUCTION

The name *liturgy* is given to the whole collection of ceremonies and prayers that make up the external worship of the Catholic Church.

The Council of Trent says: "Man being such that, without the help of sensible signs, he can only with difficulty rise to the consideration of divine things, the Church, like a tender mother, has established certain rites, has ordered that certain parts of the Mass should be said in a low and others in a loud voice. She has also instituted ceremonies: such are mysterious blessings, lights, incense, water, vestments, and many other things, in accordance with discipline and apostolic tradition." The end of all this is to lead the minds of the Faithful, by means of these visible signs of piety and religion, to the contemplation of the great mysteries hidden in Christianity.

It was God who placed in man the need of manifesting by external signs the sentiments that spring up in his soul: He is therefore the first Author of ceremonies. He Himself inspired the first religious acts, and regulated their manifestation among the Jews. Later on, His Son revealed certain essential ceremonies, and invested His Church with

power to regulate the worship that men owe to God.

The Church commands her ministers to know the holy ceremonies and binds them in conscience to carry out the prescribed rites both in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the administration of the Sacraments.

The Church goes still further: she orders her ministers to explain ceremonies to the Faithful. Wherefore it is the duty of the latter to study them. Ceremonies have been established to edify us, to instruct us, to rouse our attention; particular graces are attached to them; they are a book, a set of pictures, presented to us by religion.

The object of these "Liturgical Sermonettes for Children," is to fortify and strengthen the mustard seed of Faith implanted in their little hearts, also to excite love and to satisfy a holy curiosity as they come under their observation. And, when a non-Catholic, interested in these ancient practices of the "Mother Church," asks why and wherefore—the children of that Church are able to give an accurate and satisfactory answer.

Good Samaritan Hospital
Zanesville, Ohio

Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (1926)

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CALENDAR

TO-DAY our holy Mother, the Church, begins a new year. Since the Church is occupied with our eternal salvation, she represents the mysteries of our Redemption by means of holy seasons and feasts.

To keep up the fervor of her children, the Church has attached a special devotion to every day of the year. Sunday, or the first day of the week, was at all times specially consecrated to the Lord.

Monday was dedicated to the Holy Ghost, in order to implore His help at the beginning of the labors of the week. It is also dedicated to the memory of the Poor Souls.

Tuesday, or the third day, is generally consecrated to the worship of the Holy Angels, especially the Guardian Angels.

Wednesday, or the fourth day, is chosen by piety to honor St. Joseph as patron of a happy death.

To Thursday, or the fifth day of the week, there clings, as you are aware, a memory so consoling that the faithful have honored this day with special fervor. It was on Thursday that the Son of God

instituted the Holy Eucharist, in which He handed down to the human race His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. Since the institution of Corpus Christi the Thursdays of the year seemed to have been selected to renew this festival, as well by public offices as by private devotions.

Friday, or the sixth day, is consecrated to the Passion of Our Lord. This is a day of abstinence. So strict is the law of abstinence that the Church dispenses from it only when Christmas, or some other great feast, falls on a Friday.

Pope Urban II, wishing to draw down the blessings of Heaven on the Crusaders, was inspired to dedicate Saturday to the Blessed Virgin Mary, hoping to obtain the favor desired. Since Urban's time the faithful have made it a duty to consecrate Saturday to the great Mother of God, so as to testify their affection and gratitude towards this divine Mother by fasting, assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, or some other exercise of piety.

The first day of the New Year of the Church is the first Sunday of Advent. The word *Advent* means coming. In the liturgy it means the coming of Jesus into the world. Jesus came to save us from sin and to pave the way to Heaven for us. He is the Redeemer promised to mankind after the fall of our First Parents. The first day of Advent begins the season which is kept in memory of the time of waiting for the promised Redeemer. The

four thousand years of the Old Testament are represented by the four weeks of Advent before the feast of Christmas.

Every day of the year our Holy Mother, the Church, keeps before our minds all that Christ has done for us. The principal mysteries of our Redemption, pass before us, like a moving picture from season to season.

The holy seasons and feasts are like an open book, in which every one, even the unlearned, can read all the mysteries of our Redemption.

Holy Church has set aside two seasons in which she tries to fill the faithful with the spirit of penance. One of these seasons is called Advent and precedes Christmas. On the Sundays of Advent the priest wears the purple vestment, which signifies penance. Before Easter the Church observes the penitential season of Lent, which is a time of preparation for the great solemnity of Our Lord's Resurrection.

The holy seasons are periods of grace. The Nativity of Our Saviour, His sufferings, His circumcision, His fasting and death, His Resurrection, His Ascension, and the sending of the Holy Ghost, are a constant source of graces for man. The reason is that the Church renews the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. You know that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the Sacrifice of the Cross renewed in an unbloody manner. The holy seasons

4 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

and feasts of the year derive their value from the Holy Mass.

As the year rolls on, day by day, the Church keeps her own calendar. She celebrates the great events in the world's Redemption. She honors the Mother of God and the faithful who have served their Master well. She has her seasons of penance and her festivals of joy.

We must show our good will to God in order that the seasons and the feasts of the year may be profitable to us. When Jesus Christ was born, the shepherds and the Wise Men from the East received His grace, whilst the inhabitants of Bethlehem, Herod, and the Jewish high priests were left empty-handed. Jesus dying on the cross filled His disciples and the penitent thief with graces; the Jews received nothing. On the feast of the Holy Ghost His disciples and a few others who believed in Him received the Holy Ghost; all unbelievers were rejected by God.

The lesson we are to learn from this, dear children, is to have our hearts well prepared for every holy season and feast throughout the year.

St. Vincent Ferrer relates that a pious merchant was accustomed to give a dinner every Christmas day to three poor persons,—a man, a woman, and a child,—intending thereby to honor the Holy Family. As the merchant lay on his death-bed,

Jesus appeared to him, along with Mary and Joseph, and said to him in his sleep: "Since you so often gave us to eat on Christmas day, you shall now be our guest in Heaven." The merchant awoke much refreshed and filled with spiritual joy; shortly after, he fell asleep in the Lord, dying the death of the just.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PERIODS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

THE ecclesiastical year consists of three time-periods, called cycles.

The first of these is the Christmas Cycle. This represents the time of the Old Testament, from the promise of the Redeemer until His coming into the world. The principal feasts of this cycle are: Christmas, on which day Christ came among the Jews; and Epiphany, when He made Himself known to the Gentiles.

The days of devotion before and after Christmas seem to have been the beginning of the observance of Advent. The practice of the Church in setting apart several weeks of penance and prayer before the Feast of Our Lord's Resurrection led in time to the establishment of a similar, but shorter season, as a preparation for that other great festival, the day of the Saviour's birth. The present practice of the Church in observing this holy season is quite ancient; it dates back more than a thousand years.

During Advent we should think about the sad state of mankind under the Old Law and the long-

ing of the just for a Redeemer to save the sinful human race. We should cleanse our souls from sin and lead lives of penance. To this we are exhorted in the Gospels of the second, third, and fourth Sundays of Advent.

Belief in Jesus is the first requisite for salvation. In your Bible history, children, you read that Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the desert. So must Jesus be lifted up, that we may believe in Him and be saved. In the Old Testament those who wanted to be cured from the bite of the serpent had to look at the brazen serpent. No one who does not believe in Christ crucified can be saved.

During the season of Advent thank God that you are a child of the Catholic Church. Be zealous for your holy faith and by your good example draw others to follow you. If you meet with people who attack the truths of religion, tell them that these truths are taught by the Catholic Church, which Christ Himself established, in proof of which He performed many miracles, and for which millions of great men and women died.

Besides believing in Jesus, we must love Him. To love Jesus is to keep our souls from mortal sin. If we are in mortal sin we must make a good confession in order to recover the grace and love of God, which is to be our Christmas gift.

Before Easter the Church observes the penitential season of Lent, which is a time of preparation

8 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

for the great solemnity of Our Lord's Resurrection and ends on the eve of that festival.

The Easter cycle represents to us the bitter Passion and death of Jesus. The principal feast is Easter with Holy Week. All the holy seasons and feasts of the ecclesiastical year depend on Easter. Without Easter the Nativity of Christ would profit us nothing, and we should have no Pentecost, no feast of Mary or of the Saints.

The preparatory celebration of the Easter cycle begins with Septuagesima Sunday, and lasts nine weeks. The subsequent celebration embraces the six Sundays that come after Easter. During this time we should reflect upon the Passion of Our Lord, mortify ourselves in body and spirit, and often receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

The Pentecost cycle completes the ecclesiastical year. It begins with the feast of Pentecost and continues for twenty-four Sundays. This cycle represents the time from the first Pentecost Sunday at Jerusalem until the end of time. The principal feast of this period is Pentecost. The first Pentecost was the day on which the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles and the first believers to stay with the Church, to teach her all truth, and to guide and protect her all days, even to the end of the world. The preparatory celebration

embraces the ten days from the Ascension of Christ to Pentecost.

In these cycles the Church brings before our minds every year the whole history of our Redemption, exhorting us continually to have the Author of our Redemption always before our eyes and to show ourselves grateful to Him by avoiding sin.

St. Alphonsus Liguori tells a story about a monk who was passing through a forest one Christmas eve, thinking about the goodness of God in sending His Divine Son into the world to redeem us. He thought he heard the cries of a child somewhere near him, and turning aside a little, he saw lying on the snow a beautiful babe, crying and trembling in the cold. Filled with compassion, he said, as though speaking to it: "Why are you left alone? Who had the cruelty to leave you here?" To his surprise the child answered him: "Alas, how can I help crying, when I am abandoned by every one, even on this night of my love, when no one receives me or has pity on me!" and with these words He disappeared, for it was the Divine Child Himself. The monk then understood how great was the ingratitude of men towards Our Lord's mercy in the Incarnation.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE SUNDAY MASSES OF ADVENT

ADVENT, like every other holy season, is celebrated in a particular manner in the Sunday Masses. In the Advent Masses the Church uses the purple vestments, the color of which always symbolizes penance. Violet is the color of penance, and therefore signifies that Advent is a time of penance. Penance is necessary for us if we wish to become partakers of the grace of Redemption. The words of Christ are as true to-day as they were of old: "Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish."

Flowers are not placed on the altar except on the third Sunday, on which, as it were, a slight gleam of joy is permitted to penetrate the gloom of this penitential season. This Sunday is known as "Gaudete," from the opening words of the Introit of the Mass.

In Advent Mass is said at altars which generally have a violet frontal. This also has its significance. The people of the Old Law did not have the happiness of seeing the Redeemer. The Chosen People of the Jews longed ardently for

THE SUNDAY MASSES OF ADVENT 11

Christ and His sacrifice. Of this desire and longing, of this want of something invisible the altars concealed with a violet frontal are a symbol. They are at the same time an earnest exhortation to us during this holy season of Advent to excite in ourselves a fervent desire for Jesus, and to beg Him to come with His graces into our hearts.

According to the law of the Church, the organ should not be used at Mass on Sundays in Advent. Solemn vocal music should be employed, as Advent is a time of penance, and joyful and festive music would not be in harmony with its spirit. This represents the mourning of the ancient world over its spiritual bondage, and its sorrowful longing for the Redeemer. The third Sunday of Advent, however, forms an exception; the organ is heard again, because the Church expresses her joy that half of the time of expectation is passed, and the day of the coming of Our Lord and Redeemer is drawing nigh.

On the Sundays of Advent there is no *Gloria*. The Gloria is the song of praise which the angels chanted at the birth of Christ. As the birth of Christ is only expected, the Gloria is not sung in Advent. At the end of Mass the priest does not say, "*Ite Missa est*," but, "*Benedicamus Domino*." The first means the dismissal of the faithful assisting at Mass; they may go home, for Mass is over. "Let us bless the Lord (*Benedicamus*

12 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Domino), on the contrary, is an admonition to the people to remain in church and prolong their prayers; for as Advent is a time of penance, we must devote ourselves to prayer with more zeal and fervor than at other times. Since the Patriarchs and prophets were often on their knees, and in fervent prayers sighed that the heavens might be opened and the earth bud forth a Saviour, it is but just that in Advent, especially on Sundays, we should prolong our devotions and adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. These are the rules which the Church prescribes for the Masses on Sundays during Advent. They represent Advent to us as a time of penance, and they call upon us to prepare ourselves by wholesome exercises of penance for the proper celebration of Christmas.

The whole liturgy of the Mass is arranged so as to manifest the prevailing spirit of penance, mingled with hope. The various parts of the Mass are set apart to express the spirit of our holy Church during the Advent season. The Epistles exhort the faithful to "put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, because the Redeemer is near." The Gospels speak of the Redeemer coming in glory, and they describe the ministry of St. John the Baptist, whose exhortation was: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord and make straight His paths."

In this manner the Church's liturgy takes us

THE SUNDAY MASSES OF ADVENT 13

back in spirit to the days when the Messiah had not yet come; and it shows us that the spirit of preparation, of hope and prayer and penance, is as necessary now as it was then, if we are to profit by the Incarnation of Our Blessed Lord. We are exhorted to prepare ourselves for His coming into our hearts by His grace, and for that other coming when He shall appear again among men, not obscure, helpless or lowly, as at His birth in Bethlehem, but in power and majesty on the clouds of heaven;—when He shall come, not as a Saviour, but as a Judge.

Labor with renewed zeal that you may employ this holy season of Advent for the salvation of your soul. Think of the mercy of God, who in the very beginning promised a Redeemer, and after four thousand years sent His only Son to die for our salvation.

A Cistercian legend tells that while St. Edmund, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, was pursuing his studies at Paris, he used frequently to walk in the fields by the riverside, in order to meditate on sacred subjects. One day he beheld a boy of exceeding beauty, who saluted him, saying, "Hail, my beloved!" and asked whether he did not know him. Edmund replied that he did not remember to have seen him. Upon which the boy exclaimed: "It is strange that you do not know me, for I sit

14 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

by your side in the schools, and wherever you go I am with you." He then told Edmund to look at his face and see what was written on his forehead. Edmund looked and read, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." From that time the holy youth became more and more inflamed with the love of his Redeemer, and devoted himself more than ever to the meditation of his Sacred Passion.

A pious boy once received a beautiful picture of the holy Child Jesus. Every day he looked at it, and tried to resemble that Divine Child. "Have I been like the holy Child this day?" he used to ask himself each night. "Was I obedient like Him? Did I love God and my neighbor as He did? Have I tried to advance in wisdom and grace as He did?" Thus the boy grew up into manhood, trying to resemble the Divine Child in all things. At length he became a model of virtue, and a great Saint. Can we not do the same?

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

LITURGY OF ADVENT PENANCES

GOD wills the salvation of all men; therefore, Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of all. But in order to become sharers in the fruits of the Redemption, it is necessary for us to do penance. Saint John the Baptist appeared among the Jews immediately before the coming of the Redeemer and exhorted them to penance. The Church has set apart four weeks preceding Christmas as a time of penance.

The laws of the Church forbid us to celebrate marriages in a solemn manner during the season of Advent. By solemn marriages we understand such as are celebrated with a nuptial Mass and its blessing. The same law also forbids worldly enjoyments, banquets, and balls. Advent is a time of penance, and no one ought to indulge in sensual and frivolous enjoyments at a time when we are bidden to consider the great misery which sin has brought upon us. It is, indeed, most unworthy for Christians to indulge in these worldly pleasures and frequent places of amusement during the holy season of Advent.

16 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

In regard to penitential regulations during this season, the law and practice of the Church has varied greatly. In recent years certain days in Advent were kept as fast days in this and other English-speaking countries. The new code of Canon Law makes no mention of any fast in Advent, except on the vigil of Christmas, when that day does not come on a Sunday. The idea of the Church has nearly always been that this holy season, while a penitential time, is not to be observed so strictly as Lent, and her most recent legislation has taken away even the few fast days that remained in force during Advent.

You know that each quarter of the year has a week that is called Ember Week. The third week in Advent is one of these weeks. Advent is a holy season. It is the wish of the Church that during Ember Week we should meditate on religious truths, especially the mystery of the Incarnation; that we should fast on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and perform penitential works. In holy Mass on Wednesday the priest reads these words: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, and let the clouds rain the Just One." In another part of the Mass the Church asks Our Redeemer to come, and not delay, that we may be raised and comforted. On Friday the Church wishes to remind us of the salvation which the Redeemer is about to bring. On Saturday she admonishes us to prepare the way

for the Saviour by penance; wherefore she cries out: Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight His paths." The object of Ember Week is to awaken in us a desire for the Redeemer.

The final regulation for Advent is the vigil of Christmas day. The first Christians celebrated the days before great feasts by fasting and watching; that is, by remaining in prayer all night, or at least a portion of the night. They did this to prepare themselves for the feast of the following day. From these watchings the days preceding the feasts came to be known as vigils. Vigil means "a watch." The practice of attending the night services in church is almost entirely abolished except for religious communities, and the vigil has come to mean for the laity a day on which some of them, at least, are obliged to observe certain laws of fasting and abstinence. The vigil of Christmas is a day of fast for some and of abstinence for all. When this day falls on a Sunday, the fast and abstinence are observed on the preceding Saturday.

The days of Advent are not days of worldly distraction, but of holy recollection and of interior and exterior mortification. Show your love and gratitude for Christ by good works, especially works of mercy to the poor.

It is related in the life of St. Macarius, one of the

18 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Fathers of the Desert, that he one day received a present of a beautiful bunch of grapes. Though he felt a longing desire to taste the fruit, he determined to deny himself, and in order to exercise himself at the same time in mortification and charity he sent them on to another hermit, who lived at a little distance, and whom he knew to be sick and infirm. The sick man, however, was inspired with the same thought as St. Macarius, and sent them on to a third hermit, and he to a fourth, until in this manner they had travelled through most of the cells in the desert without any one tasting a single grape. In the end it happened that the hermit who received them last, not knowing whence they had come, sent them as a present to the holy Abbot St. Macarius. The Saint perceiving them to be the very same grapes which had been first offered to him, and learning on inquiry through whose hands they had passed, returned thanks to God for the great spirit of self-denial which the brethren had shown. Nevertheless, it is recorded that he could not himself be induced to taste the grapes.

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

CRIBS IN CHURCHES AND HOMES

ONE of the great features of our church decorations on Christmas day is the representation of the stable at Bethlehem, commonly called the crib, which awakens in us a devout spirit and Christian sentiments.

The custom of erecting a crib in churches on the feast of Christmas was introduced by St. Francis of Assisi, who had a great love and devotion to the Child of Bethlehem. St. Francis used figures to represent the Divine Infant, His Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, the shepherds, and the Magi. This idea was very favorably received, and to-day we find innumerable cribs, not only in churches, but also in Christian homes.

The crib is always an object of interest and devotion. It brings before us the loving humility of our Blessed Saviour and the lowly beginning of His life which was, from the very start, a life of suffering and self-denial. Holy Mother Church urges us to kneel before the crib in the same spirit in which the shepherds knelt before the Divine Infant, and to share their joy.

20 SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Children and adults visit these cribs and find pleasure in looking at the Infant Saviour lying on hay or straw, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph standing by, with many shepherds and angels adoring.

The crib should fill children with love for the Divine Child. As they look into the crib, they will see a figure to represent Jesus, the Son of God, who for the love of us became a poor child. If you are good children, if you have God before your eyes, and never do anything wrong, if you learn well and pray devoutly and obey willingly, the dear Infant Jesus will be pleased with you and will take you hereafter to live with Him in Heaven. But if you are bad children, if you will not learn or pray, but tell lies and steal, destroy other people's property, and do other naughty things, the Infant Jesus will forsake you and will send you to hell when you die. Therefore, dear children, kneel down now before the crib and promise Jesus very earnestly that you will always be good.

Grown-up people will also learn a lesson whilst they kneel before the crib. Tender feelings are awakened in their hearts, and with the Child Jesus they become children once more. The worldly-minded is moved when he sees how happy and merry the children are. The scene at the crib forcibly recalls to his mind happy scenes of childhood, and he realizes that he has drifted away

from joy, innocence, and a peaceful conscience.

My dear boys and girls, the crib Our Lord wishes to rest in, is, your heart. When you received the Sacrament of Baptism, the crib was prepared; the abode of Satan was purified, sanctified, and transformed into a dwelling for Christ. Therefore, the priest says: "Depart, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." Baptized persons are temples of the living God, and the Divine Infant, who once reposed in the crib at Bethlehem, really dwells in their hearts.

How many times have you not expelled Our Saviour and torn down the crib which had been erected at your Baptism! Grievous sin robbed you of the grace of innocence and thereby destroyed the crib in your heart. You must rebuild it if you wish to be saved.

If you feel that you have banished your Saviour from your heart, rebuild a crib by making a good confession. The Author of all grace will come to you in Holy Communion. Jesus enters really, wholly, and entirely into your heart and dwells there as He formerly dwelt in the crib in Bethlehem.

St. Teresa was so inflamed with love at the thought of Our Blessed Lord's goodness in becoming man and dying for us, that she looked upon this life as a continual martyrdom, through her

22 SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

ardent desire of being united to her Divine Spouse. It was her custom to sign all her letters, "*Teresa of Jesus*," to show that she lived for Jesus alone. One day, when she was walking through the cloisters of her convent at Avila, legend says she met a beautiful child, who stopped when He saw her, and looked up to her face with an engaging smile. The holy nun, wondering how the boy had been able to enter the convent, asked him to tell her his name. "I will, if you will tell me yours," said the child. "Mine?" said St. Teresa, smiling; "I am called Teresa of Jesus." "And if you would know mine," said the child, "I am called Jesus of Teresa." At the same moment He disappeared, leaving Saint Teresa's heart overflowing with wonder and gratitude at the infinite goodness of Our Lord, who returns so tenderly the love of His unworthy creatures.

SUNDAY BETWEEN NEW YEAR'S DAY AND EPIPHANY

LITURGY OF THE CEREMONIES OF BAPTISM

IN the administration of her Sacraments the Catholic Church makes use of forms and rites for the purpose of showing her faith or of exhibiting the dignity or effects of the Sacraments in spiritual gifts and graces on the soul.

Ceremonies are outward signs or expressions of inward feelings. From the very beginning ceremonies have been used in connection with divine worship. We read in the Holy Bible of the offerings and the sacrifices of the Patriarchs of old. We read of the minute ceremonial and ritual of Moses, sanctioned by God Himself. Our Lord used spit-tle to cure the blind man, and on other occasions He applied outward signs to express a spiritual gift.

Baptism is the first of the Sacraments. The ceremonies of this Sacrament are very many. The Church wishes to impress the recipient and the bystanders with the importance of this rite. The sacred rites with which it is given remind us of the

corruption in which we were born, the trials that await us in this world, and the great inheritance we are to get in the world beyond.

In our times the Sacrament of Baptism is given to infants much more frequently than to adults. The sponsors or god-parents bring the child to the baptismal font, and the priest, clad in surplice and stole, asks: "What dost thou ask of the Church of God?" The sponsors answer: "Faith." "What does faith bring thee?" "Life everlasting."

The priest then breathes into the face of the child, saying: "Depart from him, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." This ancient ceremony of breathing symbolizes the imparting of the Holy Ghost. When the evil spirit has gone out from a man, the Holy Ghost makes His abode in that man's heart.

The forehead and breast of the infant are then marked with the sign of the cross, to signify that he must be sanctified in mind and heart. In a prayer the child is asked to keep the commandments of the crucified Saviour and thus gain everlasting life.

The priest then places his hand upon the head of the child. This means that the Church takes the child under her protection. A small pinch of blessed salt is put into his mouth. Salt denotes wisdom and preserves from corruption. These meanings are expressed in the prayer that follows,

wherein God is besought to sanctify the person who has tasted the salt, so that he may be fervent, joyful in hope, and faithful in the services of God.

The banishing of the devil, called exorcism, follows. By Baptism man is delivered from the servitude of the devil and restored to the liberty of the children of God. The priest then lays the end of his stole on the infant and leads it into the church. The sponsors, together with the priest, make a profession of faith in the name of the child by reciting aloud the Apostles' Creed, which is followed by the Our Father.

After another exorcism comes the ceremony of the "Ephpheta." The priest moistens his finger with saliva from his mouth and lightly touches the ears and nostrils of the child, saying; "Ephpheta," which means: "Be thou opened in the odor of sweetness. Go out from him, O evil spirit, for the judgment of God will come." This ceremony is an imitation of what Christ did when He gave sight to a blind man and healed one who was deaf and dumb. The ears should be open to the priestly admonition and the nostrils to obtain the good odor of heavenly piety.

The great St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, who lived in the fourth century, is said to have been the founder of the first regular monastery erected in the kingdom of France. Into this monastery he

placed a young pagan, for the purpose of instructing him in the truths of the Christian religion, previous to Baptism. One day St. Martin was obliged to set out upon a journey, and during his absence the young man suddenly fell ill and died without being baptized.

Upon his return to the monastery, St. Martin found the monks plunged in the deepest affliction at this unhappy event and on the point of burying the deceased. He immediately repaired to the cell in which the body was laid out. Upon beholding it, he burst into tears, and feeling himself inspired by God to work a miracle, ordered all who were present to retire. Then he stretched himself upon the corpse, and earnestly besought the Almighty to show mercy to the deceased, and to restore him to life, in order that his soul might be washed from sin in the waters of Baptism. His prayer was heard, and the soul which had already passed before the judgment-seat of God, returned to the body of the youth, who by degrees began to open his eyes, and move his limbs, until, at the end of two hours, he arose and stood before the holy Bishop, alive and well.

When questioned afterwards as to what had befallen him after death, the youth related that, no sooner had his soul left the body, than he appeared before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge, who condemned him to be confined in a frightful dun-

geon. Thereupon two angels came forward and represented to the Judge that St. Martin was pouring forth his prayers in behalf of the condemned soul, upon which the Judge ordered him to be restored to the body, which was immediately raised to life. The young man was at once baptized and lived for many years afterwards.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

*THE CEREMONIES THAT ACCOMPANY
BAPTISM*

TO-DAY we shall continue our lesson on the ceremonies of Baptism. Up to this point the person to be baptized is still in the power of the devil. Now he is to be transplanted into the kingdom of Christ. The priest puts these questions: "Dost thou renounce Satan? and all his works? and all his pomps?" And the answer to each of these questions is: "I do renounce them." What does this all mean? To renounce the devil means to hate him, not to listen to his suggestions, to despise and reject his cunning. To renounce the works of the devil means to hate and shun sin. To renounce the pomps of the devil means to put off pride, ambition, vanity, and to be humble of heart. Pride was the beginning of all sin and caused the fall of Lucifer.

After this solemn disavowal of the devil, the priest anoints the person to be baptized, upon the breast and between the shoulders, saying: "I anoint thee with the oil of salvation, in Christ Jesus Our Lord, that thou mayest have life ever-

lasting.” This anointing means that the one who is about to become a Christian must fight hard against all the enemies of his salvation. The anointing on the breast indicates that he must make a good fight for God and his soul; anointing between the shoulders signifies that he stands in need of much strength and patience in order to carry the yoke of the Lord all the days of his life.

Now the priest changes his violet stole for a white one. As the violet stole signifies the sinful state of the person to be baptized, so the white one is a sign of the innocence and purity conferred by the Sacrament. Once more the priest begins to ask questions, this time on the Apostles’ Creed: “Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth?” The answer is, “I do believe.” Again: “Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord, who was born into this world, and suffered for us?” The sponsor replies: “I do believe.” As you perceive, the Church, before she baptizes, thrice asks the person to be baptized to profess the faith. The first time at the beginning, when she asks: “What dost thou ask of the Church of God?”—to which the answer is, “Faith.” The second time when, entering the Church, she makes him say the Apostles’ Creed, and the third time when she proposes to him the above mentioned questions. This three-fold declaration of faith indicates that the newly

baptized Christian has a strict obligation to remain faithful to the Church.

Lastly the priest says to the person to be baptized: "Wilt thou be baptized?" Answer: "I will." Christ does not force His graces on any one, but simply invites the reception of them; He does not desire slaves, but children who love Him. The Sacrament of Baptism is now administered. The priest pours water on the head of the person to be baptized, saying at the same time: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The baptized person is cleansed from sin, and is sanctified, becoming a child of God and an heir of Heaven.

The anointing of the crown of the head with chrism follows. The priest says the following prayer: "May God Almighty, the Father of Jesus Christ, who has regenerated thee by water and the Holy Ghost, and who has granted thee the remission of all thy sins, Himself anoint thee with the chrism of salvation in the name of Christ Jesus Our Lord, unto life eternal. Amen." This anointing tells the baptized person that he is a member united to Jesus Christ. He has been made a Christian, thereby partaking of the royal and priestly dignity of Christ.

The priest places a white linen cloth upon the head of the child, saying: "Receive this white garment and see thou carry it without stain before

the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ. The white garment reminds the young Christian to preserve his baptismal innocence with the greatest care.

Lastly, the priest gives to the person baptized a lighted candle, with these words: "Receive this burning light, and keep thy Baptism blameless. Observe the commandments of God, so that when the Lord shall come to His nuptials, thou mayest meet Him, together with all the Saints in the heavenly court, and mayest have eternal life, and live forever and ever." The burning candle signifies that the faith of the Christian should be neither cold nor dead. Ardent love of God and giving a good example to our fellow-men is like a burning light, spreading light and warmth all around. Such is the lesson the candle teaches.

St. Francis of Sales, when yet a child, was distinguished alike for his lively and cheerful disposition and for his sincere piety. At one time he would join with all the ardor of youth in the games of his playmates; at another time he would gather them about him and with a sweet and engaging air tell them some pious story, or prevail upon them to join him in prayer. Sometimes he would lead them to the parish church and arrange them in a circle around the sacred font where they had in infancy received the Sacrament of Baptism. "See, my dear companions," he would then say to

them, "this is a spot which ought to be dearer to us than any other in the whole world, for here it was that we were made children of God. Come, let us sing together the *Glory be to the Father*, in thanksgiving to God for His infinite goodness!" The little band would then join in singing the verse of thanksgiving and afterwards on bended knees respectfully kiss the font.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

CEREMONIES OF THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

THE ceremonies with which the Sacrament of Matrimony is administered express the solemnity of the contract and the holiness of the Sacrament. These ceremonies are of a very serious nature, for they represent the great significance of Matrimony and the duties which it imposes.

It is the earnest wish of the Church that this Sacrament shall be received at Mass and accompanied by the nuptial blessing; but a marriage may be performed apart from the Mass and even in some other place than the church.

A marriage is a very simple ceremony. It consists essentially in the expression of the mutual consent of the parties to take each other as man and wife. This is followed by the blessing of their union and the ceremony of the ring.

On the day of the marriage the betrothed go to church, accompanied by two or three witnesses and the invited guests. Two or three witnesses are necessary for entering lawfully and validly into matrimony.

The priest having come to the altar, the betrothed go to him, with their witnesses, to receive the blessing. By this they express their belief that matrimony is a Sacrament and that it must be entered into with the blessing of the Church. This was the doctrine of the Church from the beginning.

The bride appears with a wreath on her head. This wreath indicates that she has overcome all enemies that laid snares for her purity, and that she stands at the altar as a virgin. The bare head is the symbol of liberty and dominion. Men appear in church bare-headed; women, on the contrary, must have their heads covered.

In early times the bride was covered with a veil as soon as she was married, to indicate that she had lost her liberty and was now subject to her husband. The bridegroom stands at the altar on the right, the bride on the left side. By this position is indicated that the husband is the head and that the woman must be subject to him.

The officiating priest makes a short address, in which he declares that the betrothed have promised to marry each other and are now about to carry out their promise. After this he says a short prayer for the couple to obtain God's grace and blessing for them.

The priest first asks the consent of the parties. Addressing the man by name, he says: "Wilt

thou take N. N., here present, for thy lawful wife, according to the rite of our holy Mother, the Church?" To which the answer is given aloud, "I will." The same question is put to the bride. Then, at the bidding of the priest, they join their right hands. Their troth being thus pledged, and their right hands still clasped, the priest says: "I join you together in marriage, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." And they are married. He then sprinkles them with holy water. Then follows the beautiful ceremony of blessing and putting on the ring.

The giving of the marriage ring was customary at all times, and we find it in use among the Jews and pagans. The gold ring reminds the married couple of the duty of preserving their mutual love and fidelity as incorruptible as gold. The priest having blessed the ring and sprinkled it with holy water, the bridegroom then places it on the third finger of the left hand of the bride, saying: "With this ring I thee wed, and plight unto thee my troth."

It is the desire of Holy Church that the Sacrament of Matrimony shall, if possible, be administered in connection with the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass. Holy Mass is celebrated for the special benefit of the married people. The Nuptial Mass

is filled with special prayers to invoke the blessing of the Almighty on those who are about to enter the married state.

After the "Pater Noster" the priest, standing at the Epistle side of the altar, turns round, faces the married couple, who are kneeling at the foot of the altar, and pronounces two beautiful nuptial blessings, in which he implores God to bless the newly married, that they may enjoy a long life in peace and happiness.

As long as they live, the wedding day should be a memorable day for married people. They ought to celebrate it every year by hearing Mass, going to confession, and receiving Holy Communion.

St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland, was married to the king amid the splendors of the royal court. By her gentle and amiable character she succeeded in making her husband one of the most virtuous kings that have ever adorned the Scottish throne. Her whole life was employed in making the king and their subjects happy. Malcome left all the domestic management of the kingdom to his wife.

This pious couple had many children, all of whom inherited the good qualities of their parents. The queen was the mother of six boys, Edward, Edmund, Edgar, Ethelred, Alexander, and David. There were two daughters, Maud and Mary. The queen did not allow her children to be brought up

in luxury. She ordered that their food be of the simplest. They were trained to hardships, and taught how idle and empty are the things of this world when they are not used as a means to gain Heaven. She took them with her on her visits to the poor and suffering, and made them minister to the sick with their own hands.

The zealous mother examined the progress of her children and often instructed them herself in all Christian duties. She inspired them with the greatest ardor for virtue, the purest love of God, fear of His judgments, and dread of sin.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

THE EXTERNAL WORSHIP OF GOD

THE leper in to-day's Gospel adored Christ and showed Him divine honor by falling on his face before Him. This act revealed the sentiments of his heart; he saw in Christ not a mere man, but God Himself. Like this leper, we, too, must adore God not only interiorly but also exteriorly. Although interior worship is the main thing, yet exterior worship is necessary also and belongs to the interior as the body does to the soul.

Exterior worship consists in signs which manifest the sentiments of the Christian soul and make them known to others. Deep sentiments of love, fear, hope, or admiration exhibit themselves outwardly. We manifest our respectful sentiments towards God, by genuflecting, by folding the hands, and especially by participating in public worship.

Without the help of sensible signs we can rise to the consideration of divine things only with difficulty. The Church, like a tender Mother, has established certain rites, has ordered that certain parts of the Mass should be said in a low voice and

others aloud. She has also instituted ceremonies; such as mysterious blessings, lights, incense, vestments, and many other things, in harmony with discipline and Apostolic tradition.

External worship is necessary to man, because man is a being composed of body and soul, a creature that owes homage to God with his whole being. The soul honors God by interior worship, and the body honors Him in its way by external worship. When you kneel and prostrate yourself before God, you offer your body to Him.

The body supplies what the spirit cannot do. Eyes raised towards heaven, hands stretched out, canticles, prostrations, adorations diversified in a hundred ways, tears produced by penance and love—all these are signs by which the spirit pays external homage to God.

The body as well as the soul receives numberless benefits from God; therefore the body as well as the soul should thank, honor, and worship God. David, the royal Prophet, calls upon all creatures in Heaven and on earth, even the irrational and lifeless, to praise God. Shall not our body, then, this masterpiece of the visible creation, also praise and glorify its Maker? Our body is sanctified and destined to rise gloriously from the grave, to be reunited with the soul, and to enjoy everlasting glory with the soul in Heaven.

External worship is deeply rooted in our nature.

If we feel joyful or sad, we manifest it by our looks, and gestures, by words and actions. If we see a man who talks, laughs, and looks around during holy Mass, we naturally think that he has no devotion in his heart. And why do we think so? Because we are convinced that the exterior is an index of the interior, and that men who give no external sign of piety, have no devotion in their hearts. But if, on the contrary, we see a person on his knees in church, with his hands joined, and his eyes fixed upon the altar, we judge that he has devotion in his heart. The exterior reflects the interior.

Exterior worship is necessary for the sake of good example. If we neglect exterior worship altogether, never participate in it, never make the sign of the Cross, or say a vocal prayer, we should be looked upon as freethinkers and infidels. Such a bad example would have the most serious consequences for many, especially for children. Why are many young people so careless in going to church? Because they see that their parents seldom go; or if they go to Mass on Sunday, the children see that going or staying away is a matter of slight importance in their eyes. Why do so many defer their Communion until Easter? Because they see others go to confession and Communion only once a year. Those, therefore, who neglect and disregard external worship, give scandal; while

those who fulfill their religious duties conscientiously, give others a good example, and without uttering a word are constantly encouraging and exhorting them to do likewise.

Attend church frequently, participate with fervor in the public worship of God, and be present on Sundays and holy days at Mass and Benediction. Conduct yourselves everywhere as good Catholic children, whose hearts are penetrated with the spirit of religion and whose piety serves to edify others who are less pious. If we worship God with body and soul, He will be pleased with us and bless us a hundredfold.

The flatterers of King Canute, eager to gain the royal favor, called him not only King of England, but Lord of the sea. "The very elements," they said, "were subject to his command." Wishing to read them a lesson, Canute ordered his chair of state to be placed at the edge of the water, and there took his seat. The tide was then coming up, and the King, in a tone of majesty, ordered it to retire. The waves, however, advanced rapidly, and soon flowed over the king's knees. Then rising and turning to his confused nobles, Canute said to them: "Confess how vain and empty is the power of an earthly king compared with His, who alone can say to the waves, *Thus far shall ye go, and no further!*" Then, taking the crown off his head, he

placed it on the great crucifix in the Cathedral of Winchester, nor did he ever again wear it. From that day forward he studied only to advance in humility and meekness, and ended a glorious reign by a saintly death.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

LITURGY ON THE DAY OF THE LORD

THE first of all Christian festivals is Sunday. Its history is this: God, having created the world in six days, rested on the seventh; He sanctified the seventh day and commanded men also to sanctify it. "Remember," He said, "to keep holy the Sabbath Day."

Thus the repose of the Sabbath, or the seventh day, was commanded to the Jews, not only from a motive of religion, but also from a principle of humanity. The rest of soul and body, the welfare of the whole man, is the object of the institution of the Lord's Day.

In memory of the great miracle which serves as a foundation to Christianity—the Resurrection of Our Lord—Sunday was chosen by the Apostles and observed by the first Christians. Sunday is, therefore, the living proof of Our Lord's having risen from the dead. This fact is ever present to the eyes of the generations that come and go on earth.

During the time of the Apostles the faithful assembled in the Catacombs on Sunday. On entering these underground churches they found their

way lighted up by little lamps hanging from the roof or fastened to the walls. Around the tombs of the martyrs the writings of the Apostles and the Prophets were read. Then a sermon was delivered to the assembly, in order to instruct them, and to exhort them to practice the sublime maxims of virtue and religion. Afterwards all rose to make a prayer in common. The early Christians prayed standing on Sunday in memory of the Resurrection. They prayed kneeling on other days in memory of the fall of Adam and of their sins.

In consecrating Sunday to God, the Church honors the Father Almighty as Creator and Preserver of all things; she honors Jesus Christ, the Father's only Son, as our Saviour, who, after the labors of His mortal life, entered by His Resurrection into eternal rest; she honors the Holy Ghost as the principle of a new creation, through which we receive new being and a new life.

Sundays stand in intimate connection with the three principal feasts of the year, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. The Sundays of Advent refer to Christmas. The great feast of Easter is on a Sunday, likewise the Feast of Pentecost. Sundays not only remind us of these three benefits, our Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification, but also of the particular graces which the principal feasts include in themselves.

Sunday, the day which we are to devote to God

and to our soul's welfare, has a great history. The early Christians, our models in the faith, employed the Lord's Day most conscientiously in the service of God. They were eager to listen to the instruction of the Apostles, received the Holy Eucharist, gave alms to the poor, visited the sick, and offered up prayers for themselves and the whole Church. They showed their veneration to God exteriorly by wearing better clothes to do honor to their heavenly Father. This wearing of better clothes on Sunday indicated the beauty with which the soul of the Christian should be adorned. Do you wear your best clothes on Sunday and holy days for the honor of God? Are you proud of your clothes? Do your Sunday garments reflect the beauty and purity of your soul?

The glorious Chancellor of England, Blessed Thomas More, whilst in prison never failed to wear fine clothes on Sunday. When asked the reason, he replied: "I keep festivals solemnly and I wear my richest dress in honor of God, who is everywhere, and not to please the eyes of the people, who do not see me."

Among the works of piety there is one which is prescribed under pain of mortal sin. It is assistance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass being the most excellent act of religion, it is also the most excellent means of honoring God and drawing blessings down upon us.

Since Sunday is the day of the Lord, devote it to the Lord, and do not, by dissipation and vice, make it a day of the devil. Celebrate it in honor of Jesus Christ, the Sun of Justice; return thanks to Him for the light of faith; walk in this light; and let your good example shine before your companions so that they may glorify your Father, who is in Heaven.

Make it a rule to avoid sinful pleasures on Sunday and carefully to preserve the purity of your heart. Sunday is the day on which we should seek strength and comfort from Our Lord by receiving Him in the Holy Eucharist.

Attend church frequently, take part in the public worship of God with all your heart and close attention. On Sundays you must be present at Holy Mass in the morning, and you should try to go to Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the afternoon or evening. Conduct yourself everywhere as a devout Catholic, whose piety serves to edify others.

Once there lived at Lyons a poor shoemaker, who attracted the attention of everybody by working at his bench every Sunday morning. In the same street, and opposite to his house, dwelt a wealthy merchant, who, being a good Catholic, was grieved to see his poorer neighbor neglecting the duties of his religion, and determined if pos-

sible to reclaim him. Accordingly one day the rich man spoke to the shoemaker and represented to him how he offended God by working on Sunday. The shoemaker replied that it was necessity which compelled him to work. "You who are rich," added he, "can well afford to be idle one day in the week; but as for me, I could neither finish my work nor support my family if I did not labor on Sunday." "My good friend," replied the merchant, "all I ask of you is to give my advice a fair trial. But I do not wish that you should become the loser by so doing. Promise me that you will do no work and attend Mass every Sunday for the next six months, and I will make good all the losses you will sustain by following my advice. Do you accept my offer?" "Willingly," replied the cobbler. "It is much easier for me to rest than to work, so that, as I am in no case to be the loser, it is a bargain."

At the end of six months the merchant paid another visit to the shoemaker. "My friend," said he, "I have been delighted to see that you have kept your word. Tell me, now, the amount of your losses, and I will make good." "Ah, sir," replied the poor man, "it is I who am in your debt, not you in mine, for I have been the gainer by our agreement." "In what way?" said the merchant. "I will tell you," replied the shoemaker. "Since I attend Mass every Sunday, peace and happiness

have reigned in our house, and we have now time to devote ourselves to the care of our children.” “I congratulate you on your happiness,” said the rich man, “and I must acknowledge that I am not really in your debt, since you have improved in your business. But see, here is the money which I intended for you; take it as a mark of my friendship. I am only too happy to have been the means of showing you how true it is that no one ever loses by faithfully serving God.”

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

FEAST DAYS OF OUR LORD AND OF THE SAINTS

AMONG the events that make up Church history, there are some glorious, some sad, some consoling. The Church consecrates the memory of all. Amongst the saddest events that religion presents to our consideration there is always room left for joy. This is the reason why the Church calls by the name of festivals the days on which she celebrates some anniversary of Jesus Christ or of the Saints.

The word festival means a happy day, a pleasant day, a day of solemn assembly. A feast is a repast of joy and ceremony. There is no festival without a feast. The Church forbids fasts on Sundays and, as a general rule, on holidays. All festivals here below are an image of the ever-lasting festival hereafter, in which soul and body shall have their own separate joys.

In the Christian Church festival days are not of divine institution. They were all established by the Church herself, inaugurated at different times and in various parts of the world. Some few of them go back to the Apostolic era.

The Church desires that the great truths of religion and the important events in its history shall be impressed on the minds of her children by the various festivals. Furthermore, she wishes us to take as an example the virtues of those who have been faithful servants of God, who have lived here on earth in constant communion with the Heavenly Father.

The Christian festivals show us a God, the Saviour and Sanctifier of men. Nothing serves better than festivals to point out for us the direct object of religious worship during the three great epochs of Revelation.

Another object of festivals is to fix the memorable events of religion by recalling them every year. What lessons do not such days as the Ascension, the Assumption, Christmas, and many others bring home to us? From the beginning festivals of martyrs were celebrated. The death of a martyr was a victory for him, an example for his brethren, a triumph for religion. The day of his death was solemnized; an assembly met at his tomb, and the holy mysteries were celebrated there. The courage of the faithful was thereby aroused. The same motive gave rise to the festival of Saints who were not martyrs.

The feasts are divided into holydays of obligation and ordinary feasts. On the former the faithful are obliged to hear Mass and abstain from un-

necessary servile work; on the latter the Church observes the feasts in her Office and Mass without imposing any obligation on the laity.

By the new Code of Canon Law, effective Pentecost Sunday, 1918, the following are the feasts of precept, or holydays of obligation, for the churches of the Latin rite: All Sundays of the year; the feast of Christmas; the Circumcision, the Epiphany, Ascension Day, Corpus Christi, the Assumption, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, the feast-days of St. Joseph and of Sts. Peter and Paul, and All Saints' Day. The list of holydays for us American Catholics in the United States is as follows: all Sundays of the year; the feast of Circumcision; Ascension Day; the feast of the Assumption; the feast of All Saints; the feast of the Immaculate Conception and Christmas.

The solemnities of Corpus Christi and Sts. Peter and Paul (June 29) are kept on the Sunday next following the feast.

There are three principal feasts of Our Lord: Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. Around these cluster some secondary feasts, such as, the Circumcision and the Epiphany of Our Lord, which follow Christmas. The lesson learned from these two feasts is that Jesus came to redeem, not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles. Right after Easter we celebrate the Ascension of Christ, which

is the fulfillment of His glorification. After Pentecost we have Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi.

The Church celebrates more feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary than of any other Saint because Mary stands in much closer relation to our Redemption than the other saints. There are five principal feasts of Mary: the Immaculate Conception, the Nativity, the Annunciation, the Purification, and the Assumption. Two of these, the Annunciation and the Purification, show us Mary as the Mother of God. The feast of the Assumption turns our eyes to Mary as Queen of Heaven looking down upon us, her children. She is our advocate and intercessor with Jesus.

The Church celebrates the feasts of the Holy Angels, not only because the Angels are our friends and protectors, but also because they are intimately connected with the work of our Redemption. Thus, Gabriel announced to Daniel the time when Christ would appear, and to the Blessed Virgin that she had been chosen by God to become the Mother of His Son. At the birth of Jesus Angels appeared to the Shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem.

The Church celebrates daily one or more saints to implore their intercession, to induce us to venerate them and imitate their virtues. The day which is generally celebrated in their honor is the day of their death. On the day of their death they

were tried as soldiers of Christ; they were born again to eternal life.

The Church celebrates some feasts with greater, others with less, solemnity. Of course, the feasts of Our Lord hold the first rank; then follow in succession those of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, the Holy Angels, the Apostles, Martyrs, Bishops, Priests, Confessors, Virgins, and Widows.

The Church has ordained a preparatory celebration for some feasts. To this class belong the three principal feasts of the year, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. The preparation for Christmas is the time of Advent; for Easter, the Lenten season; for Pentecost, the nine days intervening between it and the feast of the Ascension. These three principal feasts, and several others, have also an after-celebration of eight days, which is called the Octave.

Let us yield to grace, and the Holy Spirit will tell us all we should do to celebrate our festivals in such a manner that they may become for us a pledge of admission to that everlasting festival of which they are but a faint image.

One of the ancient Fathers in the desert had a vision of Heaven. He saw there four different companies of Saints, placed one above the other in glory. The lowest group was composed of those who, while on earth, had been afflicted with sick-

ness and bodily infirmities, and had borne them patiently for God's sake. The second group consisted of those who had spent their lives in acts of charity towards their neighbor. In the third group were those holy solitaries who for Christ's sake had left the world to seek the kingdom of God by a life of prayer and penance. All these were enjoying great happiness in God's holy presence. But the fourth group was still more glorious, and those who composed it seemed to possess even a greater happiness than the others. The solitary asked the Angel who showed him these things, who were those who formed that glorious company.

"Those whom you see so high up and so beautiful," answered the Angel, "are men and women who, when in the world, were obedient. The others served God well, therefore they are now enjoying the fruit of their fidelity. But in their good works there was much that was agreeable to themselves. But those who were obedient and renounced their own will to submit themselves to the will of others whom God had placed over them, were raised to a higher degree of glory."

From this we learn the reason why the Church has classified the various feasts of the Saints.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

VENERATION OF SAINTS

LAST Sunday we learned about the feast-days which the Church has set aside to honor the Saints of God. To-day we shall talk about the Heroes of God, called Saints.

The Saints are those mortal creatures who have entered Heaven and see God as a reward for their faith; they possess God as a reward of hope; and they enjoy God, the beginning and end of all love, as a reward for their charity. The Church venerates these men and women and pays a real religious homage to them. The Blessed Virgin Mary is honored as a Saint of God, yea, the greatest of saints and our most powerful intercessor before His throne. The Church adores God only, but she honors the Saints.

The Saints are the chosen friends of God; they are souls who have served Him well, conquered the devil, and thereby won their heavenly reward. They are deserving of our homage because of their holiness; and, as they are still members of God's Church, they are united to us in what is called the "Communion of Saints." We honor them, and

they pray for us; but neither they nor the Blessed Virgin Mary can give us any grace or show us any mercy.

It is reasonable to suppose that the Saints can help us in our needs. On earth we are urged to pray for one another. We are told that we should go to God with the wants of others as well as with our own. Now, it is hard to see a reason why souls that are with God should cease to exercise Christian charity and should be unable to intercede for their brethren.

If the continual prayer of the just man upon earth avails much, what must we say of the prayer of the Saints in heaven, who are free from all imperfections? In the Holy Book we read how God, through the intercession of Moses, again and again showed mercy to the people of Israel after they had grievously offended Him.

Church history and the lives of the saints furnish us with proofs of this consoling truth. St. Augustine, the great Doctor of the Church, relates the following miracle as an eye witness. "There was a man at Hippo named Bassus, a native of Syria. While praying before the relics of St. Stephen for his daughter, who was dangerously ill, he was followed by some of his servants, who wished to inform him that she was dead. Bassus' friends, however, who met the servants on the way, prevented them from informing their master of the

sad news, fearing that he would be overcome by his feelings in the presence of all the people. On reaching home, he threw the dress of his daughter, which had touched the relics, over the body and she immediately came back to life." After relating this miracle, St. Augustine remarks that volumes could be filled with the accounts of the miraculous cures which were effected at Hippo and Calamus by the invocation of St. Stephen.

If the saints of God have the power of interceding for us, it is certain that we must have some means of communicating with them so that they may know our needs. We do not know how the Saints come to the knowledge of our wants when we pray to them. At any rate, the information which they have and the petitions which they may receive from us, depend entirely upon God's goodness.

We Catholics, then, adore God alone. He is our Creator, our Redeemer, our hope here and hereafter. But we also believe that we have a host of friends in heaven. We believe that these friends are also friends of our blessed Lord; that one of them is His Mother, loved by Him so dearly that He will grant her every prayer; that another is His foster-father, whom He revered on earth and loves in heaven, that the others are His loyal servants who possess Him now and forever. We believe that all this great multitude, which no

man can number, is a component part of God's Church, and that he should honor them because God has honored them, and they can and do intercede for us.

It is related of St. Francis Solanus, the Saint of South America, that when the drinking water ran dry in an Indian settlement, he prayed as only a saint can pray, and sweet water gushed forth from the earth. Even in the present day, the Spaniards and Indians call the spot "Well of Saint Solanus." This miracle confirmed the faith of the Indians in the Sokotonic settlement, in Peru.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

LENT has one devotion that is very dear to every Christian heart, and that is the Way of the Cross.

Many Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land, on their return home, erected crosses in quiet groves, or upon the side of a hill in imitation of the spots on Mount Calvary venerated for some incident in the Passion of Our Lord. They then visited the places marked by the crosses and said some prayers. To make the Passion of Our Lord more real they attached to these crosses pictures or paintings representing scenes of the Passion. The followers of St. Francis of Assisi introduced this devotion everywhere, and the multitude of the faithful who flocked to their churches to perform the pious exercises of the Way of the Cross prompted the bishops to erect the Stations in parochial churches. The Sovereign Pontiffs not only approved of this devotion, but, to stimulate the faithful still more to its performance, enriched it with the indulgences granted to the visits of the Holy Land.

The number of the Stations is fourteen. I will name them in the order in which they follow: Jesus is condemned to death by Pilate; Jesus is laden with the cross; Jesus falls under the weight of the cross; Jesus meets His Mother; Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross; Veronica offers Jesus her veil; Jesus falls a second time under the cross; Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem; Jesus falls a third time under the cross; Jesus is stripped of His garments; Jesus is nailed to the cross; Jesus dies upon the cross; Jesus is taken down from the cross; Jesus is laid in the tomb.

You see this is a simple manner of picturing to ourselves the painful way of our Saviour up Mount Calvary and of accompanying Him in spirit on His last journey. Besides, it is a devotion we can perform at any time.

In the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary we read that after the Ascension of her Divine Son into Heaven she often went over the road to Calvary, recalling His sufferings. We certainly do well if with Mary and other holy souls we follow our divine Saviour on His painful journey to Calvary.

Some of the scenes depicted in the Way of the Cross are described in the Gospels. The falls of Jesus under the cross, as well as the beautiful story of Veronica, are based on pious beliefs handed down to us from the time of the Apostles.

The Stations are generally affixed to the walls

of the church. We shall find them erected in the open air on the grounds of religious institutions and in cemeteries.

There is no fixed rule as to which side of the church the stations should begin on. The beginning and the ending depends on the manner in which the artist has depicted Our Lord. Our Saviour is represented moving forward. Therefore, in some churches you will find the first station on the gospel side, in others on the epistle side of the main altar.

The person who devoutly performs the Way of the Cross in the state of grace gains the same indulgences as if he had visited the actual Way of the Cross in Jerusalem. The precise number or amount of these indulgences is not specified. No other practice in our holy religion is so earnestly recommended or so plentifully indulgenced for us and for the Poor Souls in Purgatory.

Our holy Mother, the Church, has made it easy for us to gain great spiritual benefits for our souls and for the Poor Souls in Purgatory. She does not require that we should make a long journey, but permits us to gain in a very easy manner the favors which we should obtain if, like the pious pilgrims of old, we crossed land and sea to the Holy Places where our Blessed Saviour lived and died.

By frequently studying the Passion of Christ

we are drawn to repentance. The wounds of Christ move even the hardest hearts and inflame the coldest.

Hippolytus, a pious priest of Florence, had a picture which represented the head of Christ crowned with thorns. He stood before it many an hour during the day, and with profound devotion contemplated the infinite love of Jesus. On the opposite side of the street there lived a vain daughter of the world, who was scandalized because she thought the priest was looking at himself so often in the mirror. The priest brought the picture to her house. When she beheld the image of her Redeemer, the crown of thorns on His head, the tears in His eyes, the livid lips, and His countenance covered with spittle, sweat, and blood, she was deeply moved. Then the priest said: "You have the mirror you desired. Look at yourself therein daily. If it makes no impression upon you and does not move you to repentance, you will be lost. Behold here with your own eyes Him to whom you must one day give an account of all the souls whom you have scandalized." The sight of the picture and the serious words of the priest made so deep an impression upon this worldly-minded woman that she began bitterly to bewail her sins; she threw herself at the feet of the priest and begged his pardon. She afterwards retired into a convent and led a penitential life.

Practice diligently the devotion of the Way of the Cross in which the Passion and death of Jesus Christ are vividly brought before your eyes.

Long ago a certain knight, called Hildebrand, had been insulted by another nobleman, who harbored ill-will towards him. Hildebrand felt the insult so keenly that he determined to be revenged. Accordingly a duel was arranged, and when the day came, Hildebrand rose early and prepared for the combat. As he was going towards the appointed place, he had to pass by a chapel, and as the hour of meeting had not yet come, he thought he might go into the chapel to wait. So he entered and began to walk round; in doing so, he saw three pictures on the walls. One was the scourging at the pillar, and below it the words: "When He suffered, He threatened not." The second represented Our Lord clad in the fool's garment, with the words: "He rendereth not evil for evil." The third was the crucifixion, with the prayer: "Father, forgive them." It was not by chance that Hildebrand had gone into the church. God had led him there, and now His grace spoke to him by these pictures. He threw himself on his knees and began to pray for himself and the one who had injured him. When the hour came for the contest, Hildebrand rose from his knees to go and meet his enemy, who was awaiting him.

But what was the surprise of the latter to see the knight walk up to him, take him by the hand and ask his forgiveness. "Jesus forgave His enemies and prayed for them; let us do the same," he said. From that day forward they were friends.

When we are tempted to avenge ourselves, let us go to the nearest church and make the Way of the Cross.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

THE LITURGY OF SERMONS

OUR LORD commanded His Apostles to go and teach all nations. The bishops and the priests of the Catholic Church fulfill this command when they preach.

The Church directs her priests to wear certain vestments when they preach the word of God. A surplice, or alb, and a stole are required. Preaching is a duty assigned to the priesthood, and only priests are allowed to perform it. They announce and explain the Word of God; they speak officially and appear as the representatives of Jesus Christ, preaching by His commission and in His name.

The color of the stole always corresponds to the feast, and from it we learn that the sermon belongs to the feast. This shows that the sermon is a necessary part of the service of the feast.

The place where the sermon is preached is called the pulpit. Pulpits are sometimes made of very costly material, such as marble, but generally they are made of wood. In the early days of Christianity bishops and priests frequently mounted a reading desk when they preached. The desk stood at the entrance to the sanctuary, and two or three

steps led to it. Our present pulpit dates back to the thirteenth century. The elevation of the pulpit is for a particular purpose—namely, that the preacher may look over the assembled faithful and be more easily heard.

The preaching of the Word of God begins with prayer. So it was in ancient times. Before the bishops and priests began to preach they signed themselves with the sign of the cross, a custom which the Christian emperors also observed when they made a public speech. After that they saluted the people with the words, "Peace be with you"; and the people answered, "And with Thy spirit."

Now-a-days a short hymn is sometimes sung by the choir, in which the Holy Ghost is invoked for the worthy delivery of the Word of God. This hymn is sung that the preacher may receive from above light, strength and unction to preach the Word of God and obtain good results. The Holy Ghost is invoked for the people also, that they may profitably receive what is said, make good resolutions, and live accordingly.

After the hymn the sign of the cross is made at the reading of the Gospel, because all our actions should begin in the name of the most Holy Trinity. In the Gospel for this day Our Lord says that some seed fell by the wayside. He explains that this represents those who hear the Word of God,

but the devil comes and takes it out of their hearts, lest believing, they should be saved. The devil endeavors to hinder the fruit of the divine word. That he may not be able to do this, we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross, which has the sacramental power of keeping away evil spirits.

The priest reads the epistle and gospel for the Sunday or feast-day. (St. Jerome, Doctor of the Church, who lived in the fifth century, by order of Pope St. Damasus, compiled the epistles and gospels which are read at Holy Mass daily.) Having finished reading, he announces the text and proceeds with the sermon.

In the first Christian ages the bishops and priests were seated whilst preaching. In some countries the people remained standing after the gospel had been read to them. Now-a-days the Word of God is preached in a standing posture, but the people sit down after the gospel has been read.

Jesus taught standing and sitting. Whether the priest preaches standing or sitting, he imitates the example of Jesus. Sitting signifies that the priest is a teacher; for teachers, during the hours of instruction, generally sit. The standing posture, which is prescribed in our days, indicates that the priest is the Ambassador of Christ.

That the people hear the Word of God either standing or sitting, has both its historical and symbolical reason; the hearers of Jesus sometimes

stood and sometimes sat. The standing posture indicates reverence for the Word of God; the sitting posture reflects the interior quiet and recollection with which we should hear that Word, as Mary Magdalen did when she sat at the feet of Jesus.

In the early times no one was permitted to leave the church during the sermon. Christians who without good reason leave the church during the sermon, sin in several ways: They refuse due reverence to the Word of God, they deprive themselves of that which is frequently very necessary for their instruction, they disturb others, and give scandal and bad example.

St. Antony of Padua once preached in the presence of a great multitude, among which were many public sinners. They took the sermon so much to heart that nothing was heard on every side but weeping, sighing, and moaning, so that the Saint was frequently obliged to stop in the midst of his discourse. Some cried out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Others struck their breasts, and many were converted.

Listen attentively to the word of God. Hear it every Sunday and holyday. During the week think frequently of what you have heard in the sermon, and pray to God that He may give you the grace to put your good resolutions into practice.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

THE FORTY HOURS OF ADORATION AND BENEDICTION

THE Saints and Angels are constantly adoring God in Heaven, and the members of the Church on earth must strive to do the same. Since we are closely allied to the Blessed in Heaven, our adoration also should be unceasing. Our Holy Mother, the Church, wishes that all her children should have a share in this continuous homage. She has decreed that in each diocese throughout the world there shall be a continuous adoration of the Blessed Sacrament during the year. Therefore, in each parish the world over, at some appointed time, occurs the impressive ceremony known as the Forty Hours' Devotion.

The solemn ceremonies of the Blessed Sacrament which were held every year on the feast of Corpus Christi gave rise to this devotion. In these public celebrations the Sacred Host was borne through the streets. These processions stirred the people to a greater devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and thus arose the practice of leaving the Sacred Host on the altar for public adoration.

This was found to be particularly useful at the carnival time, the two days preceding Ash-Wednesday, when the people give themselves over to dissipation. The bishops sought to awaken the faithful to better, holier things, to prepare them for the Lenten season, and to make reparation to God for the insults offered to His Majesty. For this purpose they adopted the plan of exposing the Blessed Sacrament in the churches for forty hours, in memory of the time during which the Sacred Body of Jesus rested in the Sepulchre. The Forty Hours' Devotion owes its origin to Father Joseph, a Capuchin Friar of Milan.

The decorated churches and altars, the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the processions, sermons, all this was not without fruit. Many Christians ceased to take part in the pleasures of the carnival season, and participated instead in public devotions. In these they found greater and sweeter joys than in the frivolous pleasures of the world. Popes Benedict XIV and Clement XIII recommended this beautiful devotion to the faithful and enriched it with many indulgences.

St. Magdalen of Pazzi remained almost without intermission before Jesus in the Tabernacle during Shrovetide, bewailing the offences against God and the ruin of so many souls. St. Catherine of Siena watched and prayed day and night that many sins might be prevented. St. Gertrude was accustomed

on these three days, by prayer and silence and other pious exercises, to implore God for the amendment of a sinful people. One day she saw our Divine Saviour sitting upon a throne in great glory in Heaven; before Him stood St. John the Evangelist, who was writing in a large book. She asked Our Lord what St. John was writing. He answered that His disciple was writing all the good works and mortifications that Christians performed during Shrovetide, that after their death they might be abundantly rewarded.

The rubrics and ceremonies in connection with the Forty Hours were regulated by Clement XIII. The altar of exposition is always the high altar of the church. The attention and devotion of the people are directed to this altar. At least twenty wax candles must be burning. There must be a continual relay of watchers before the Blessed Sacrament, but only priests and clerics are allowed to kneel in the sanctuary. On account of the scarcity of clerics altar boys are now permitted. All who enter and leave the church should go down on both knees and bow low in adoration.

No Masses are allowed at the altar on which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, except at the opening and closing of the Forty Hours. The opening Mass is called "Mass of Exposition." On the second day the "Mass of Peace" is said on another altar, reminding us of the original purpose of the

Forty Hours—protection against enemies and the peace of Christendom. The closing of the devotion takes place at the “Mass of Reposition.” At both the opening and the closing the Litany of the Saints is chanted and a procession of the Blessed Sacrament is held. No Requiem Masses are allowed in the church during the Adoration.

In our part of the world the adoration does not last forty hours for the reason that a sufficient number of worshippers could hardly be provided during the night. On the first day the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament generally lasts until nine o'clock at night; on the second, until the same hour; and on the closing day, from an early hour until the Mass of Reposition: altogether a little more than thirty hours.

This devotion has been enriched with many indulgences by many Popes. A partial indulgence of seven years and as many “quarantines” (forty days) is gained each day that a visit is made to the church where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed. A plenary indulgence, applicable to the Poor Souls in Purgatory, is obtained by one visit with confession and Holy Communion and the usual prayers for the intention of our Holy Father, the Pope.

A blessing with the Sacred Host is called Benediction. This ceremony has become very popular, combined with various services of the Church, such as Vespers, the Stations of the Cross, and the

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devotional meetings of sodalities. The Sacred Host is exposed in a monstrance, and is incensed during the singing of hymns, one of which is the "Tantum Ergo." During the Blessing the chimes ring three times; the faithful bow low and make the sign of the cross.

St. Wenceslas, King of Bohemia and martyr for the Faith, was celebrated for his extraordinary devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Not content with assisting daily at Mass, kneeling with reverence on the bare pavement, he esteemed it an exceeding honor to serve Mass in person, and to be employed in any way in the services of the altar. In his vineyard he gathered and pressed the grapes to make the wine which was used at Mass. Not content with spending many hours of the day in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, he often rose at night, and, drawn by the power of Divine Love, hastened to the church to visit his hidden God. No wonder that his countenance on such occasions, appeared all on fire, and that the flames of love, which consumed his soul, communicated themselves to his body, so that the page who accompanied him, by treading in his footsteps, no longer experienced the cold, though the ground was covered with snow.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

LITURGY OF THE BLESSED ASHES

EVERY sin must be punished in this world or in the next; in this world by penitent man; or in the next by an avenging God. Convinced of the truth that the less we spare ourselves, the more God will spare us, the early Christians and the penitents of all ages punished their bodies to expiate sin. The Church entered into their views. The first day of Lent was chosen for public penances.

On Ash-Wednesday blessed ashes are put on the foreheads of the faithful. The language used in the blessing of the ashes is very beautiful. God is besought to spare the sinners; to send His holy Angels to bless the ashes, so that they may become a salutary remedy; that all upon whom they are sprinkled may have health of body and soul. He is implored to bestow His mercy upon us, who are but dust and ashes; and just as He spared the Ninivites, so the Church begs Him to spare us, who, like them, wish to do penance and obtain forgiveness.

After these prayers the ashes are sprinkled with

holy water and incensed. The ashes having been blessed, the priest first puts some of them on his own head and then on the foreheads of those present.

In the Old Testament we read that ashes were a figure of penance. When the people of Niniveh were aroused to penance by the preaching of the Prophet Jonas, they put on sackcloth and sat on ashes. King David put ashes on his bread, that he might be reminded of his sins even at his meals. Tamar, David's daughter, put ashes on her head. The early converts from Judaism most probably introduced the use of ashes, with which they had been familiar in their own faith, into the Christian Church.

At first the ashes were imposed only on public sinners. Public penitents who had the misfortune to sin grievously and who wished to recover God's favor, asked for a public penance on Ash-Wednesday. With this intention they appeared barefooted and in mourning garments in the church. Weeping and wailing they asked pardon of the bishop, who put ashes on their heads, sprinkled them with holy water, and with the clergy said over them the Litany of the Saints. At these ceremonies there were present other Christians who from a motive of humility and devotion, had ashes put on their heads, also. In the year 1091, the Council of Benevento decreed that the

ashes should be distributed to all, that all might be reminded of the necessity of penance. Since that time the custom of putting ashes on the head has existed throughout the whole Catholic world, and there is now no parish church in which ashes are not blessed and put on the foreheads of the faithful. Owing to this ceremony the first day of the forty days' fast is called Ash-Wednesday.

The ceremony is surely very proper for us all. We are all sinners. We all stand in need of God's mercy and forgiveness. Unless we do penance we too shall perish. Expressive of this idea is the ordinance of Ash-Wednesday. Kneeling to receive the ashes, we profess ourselves sinners, indeed; but by God's mercy contrite sinners, hoping to obtain pardon from Him who will never despise an humble and a contrite heart.

The ashes are procured by burning palms blessed on Palm Sunday. The palm is an emblem of the peace and victory which the soldier enjoys after a war. The Saints in heaven are represented with palms in their hands, to signify that, after their victories here below over the devil and the flesh, they now enjoy peace in Heaven. The palms reduced to ashes remind us that Heaven was lost to us by sin, and that we can no more regain it by our natural powers than it is possible for palms burnt to ashes to become verdant again and grow. The palm signifies victory and the ashes teach us

that we cannot gain the victory over sin and Satan except by the practice of humility and mortification.

The priest puts the ashes on the heads of the people. The head is the seat of pride. We say of the proud man: "He carries his head high." We have no reason to be proud, since we are but dust and ashes. The ashes are put on in the form of a cross. The sign of the cross reminds us of Jesus crucified. We can do penance and escape eternal death only through the merits of Jesus Christ. If Jesus died on the cross for us, we ought to be willing to do penance. While applying the ashes the priest says: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and shalt return unto dust." By often thinking of death we shall keep away from sin.

It is related of the unfortunate Louis XVI, King of France, who died on the scaffold during the Revolution, that when he was a youth of twenty years, he said one day to his courtiers: "I have not done much in the way of keeping Lent this year, but next year it will be different, I shall have to fast." "Sire," said one of them, "that will be impossible, for you would not be able to hunt." "No matter," replied Louis, "I must give up hunting if it is necessary, for a mere amusement does not excuse any one from obeying the laws of the Church."

The same king, when in prison and in the hands of his merciless enemies, was equally exact in observing the days of abstinence, and was wont to content himself for his meal with a piece of dry bread, when forbidden food was placed before him in derision by his cruel jailer.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

ON FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

IT is the desire of every Christian to be with Our Lord some day for all eternity. To enjoy this happiness we must imitate Jesus throughout His life upon earth. His whole life was pure self-denial and mortification. Nothing remains for us but to mortify our flesh and to walk in the Way of the Cross. Lent is a time of penance, and we must practice these holy exercises during this time. Our holy Mother, the Church, publishes uniform regulations for the season of Lent and imposes a forty-day fast on her children.

Why does the Church command her children to fast? Because it pleases God. In the Old Testament we read that Moses went up into the mountain and stayed there forty days and forty nights, neither eating bread nor drinking water. After this God was so pleased with Moses that He favored him with His most intimate conversation. God also transfigured him in his mortal body, for rays came forth from his head, and his face shone as the sun. The prophet Elias also fasted forty days on his way to Mount Horeb. God favored

Elias with a wonderful apparition and took him to Himself, not by death, but alive, in a fiery chariot. Both of these Saints were chosen by our Divine Lord to be witnesses of His transfiguration on Mount Thabor. Jesus, likewise, fasted forty days and forty nights in the desert before He began His public career.

Fasting is beneficial both for the soul and the body. The intellectual powers are sharpened by moderation in the use of food. Among the prisoners of the King of Babylon was the youth Daniel, who afterwards became a great prophet. The king gave orders that Daniel and his companions should receive the same food as served at the royal table. But Daniel was determined not to defile himself at the king's table, and God gave him grace in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. And Daniel said to Malasar: "Try, I beseech thee, thy servants for ten days, and let pulse be given us to eat and water to drink, and look upon our faces and the faces of the children who eat of the king's meat, and as thou shalt see, deal with thy servants." And when the prince had heard these words, he tried them for ten days; and after the ten days their faces appeared fairer and fatter than all the children that eat of the king's meat. And when the days were ended, they stood before the king—Daniel and his companions, and in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king

inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the diviners and wise men that were in all his kingdom.

By fasting the soul is fortified and enabled both to bring the body into subjection and to overcome the temptations of the devil. The fortress surrenders when the garrison is starved out; so the body under stress of hunger, yields to the will and the understanding. Our bodies have to be tamed like wild animals. The devil regards the flesh as his best ally; he knows that the enemy at a man's fireside can do him the worst and greatest harm. By fasting we put our foe in irons, so that he cannot wage war against us. The athlete who "refrains himself in all things," in preparation for the contest, is more likely to conquer. A high degree of virtue is also acquired by means of fasting. It inclines man to prayer; it helps him to overcome himself, to be gentle, patient, and chaste; it makes him resemble the angels, who neither eat nor drink. In the same proportion that the animal part of our nature is lessened, our spiritual nature is invigorated; like the scales of a balance, as one goes down, the other goes up.

Health is improved and life prolonged by abstemiousness. It is the parent of good health. The hermits in the Theban desert fasted rigorously and they lived to be a hundred years old. The Wise Man says: "He that is temperate shall prolong

his life." By fasting we obtain from God the pardon of our sins; by it we also work off some of our purgatory. God hears and answers the prayers of those who fast; He heard the prayers of the centurion, who fasted until the ninth hour, and sent an Angel to him. St. Augustine calls fasting and almsgiving the two pinions of prayer.

The Church has set aside forty days for the Lenten fast. The number forty has a special significance; it rained forty days on earth at the Flood; the Ninivites had forty days in which to repent; Christ dwelled on earth forty days after His resurrection; the Jews wandered forty days in the desert. The forty days of Lent are intended to commemorate the fasting of Christ. During this time those who are of age should take only one full meal a day, and all Christians should avoid boisterous amusements and meditate on the sufferings of Christ. On Good Friday Jesus died on the cross for us. The entire forty days' fast is dedicated to this great mystery of love. Therefore, during that time various devotions in honor of the Passion and death of Jesus take place, such as the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, and sermons on the Passion.

During Easter time every Catholic is bound to receive Holy Communion, and in order to receive this Sacrament worthily, he must go to confession, if he is in the state of mortal sin. They who do

not comply with this precept of the Church commit a mortal sin and expose themselves to the danger of being deprived of Christian burial.

The following is a summary of the laws concerning fast and abstinence: All Fridays are days of abstinence; Ash-Wednesday, the Fridays and Saturdays of Lent, the Ember Days, and the Vigils of Christmas, Pentecost, the Assumption and All Saints are days of fast and abstinence. The other days of Lent are days of fast, but not of abstinence.

There is neither fast nor abstinence on any Sunday or holyday of obligation; and if any of the above-named vigils falls on a Sunday or holyday, the fast or abstinence is not kept on the preceding day. On Holy Saturday the fast and abstinence ends at noon, in joyful anticipation of the solemnity of Easter.

Fish and meat may now be used at the same meal on Lenten days when meat is permitted.

There are fast-days, called Ember-days, which occur four times a year. They are set aside for special prayers and fasting to implore God's mercy on all His creatures. During this time the bishops generally ordain young men to the priesthood.

The difference between a fast-day and a day of abstinence is this—on a fast-day you reduce your meals, whilst on a day of abstinence you abstain from meat.

Whatever may be the conditions of our lives, we must practice penance in some form.

A young boy, whose family neglected the laws of the Church, came at length to prepare for his First Holy Communion. During the instructions he was reminded of the sinfulness of eating meat on Fridays, as had been his custom, which he resolved now to mend. His resolution was put to a test a day or two later, for nothing was served for Friday's dinner but meat. The boy this time refused to take it, explaining the reason of his refusal. The father in anger took him from the table, and putting him into a dark room, ordered him to receive no food till the next day. The mother, though as negligent in her duty as her husband, could not help feeling for her child, and later in the day took him something to eat. To her surprise he would not take it, saying that as he could now obey his father without sin, he would rather not eat what she had been good enough to bring. The father, hearing this, was led to think over his past life, and his conversion was the result, along with the conversion of his wife.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

THE SANCTIFICATION OF LENT

THE penitential season of Lent consists of forty days appointed being the week-days of the six and one-half weeks preceding the great feast of Easter. The Sundays during this time are a part of Lent, but are not observed as days of fasting. The forty days of Lent are intended to commemorate the fasting of Christ in the desert and as a means of sanctification.

It must be our earnest endeavor to seek reconciliation with God during the Holy Season of Lent, since it is a time of penance. For this reason ashes were put on our foreheads, and with earnest words we are called upon to bring forth fruits worthy of penance.

Corporal fast during Lent consists in abstaining from flesh-meat on certain days. In early times the Christians abstained from flesh-meat, nay even from milk, butter, cheese, and eggs during the whole season of Lent. Pope Clement VI allowed the use of milk, butter, and eggs. In our days this precept of fasting is no longer in force. The Church, accommodating herself to the circum-

stances of the time, allows the use of flesh-meat during the whole season of Lent except on a few days.

It is not without good reason that she forbids the use of flesh-meat on certain days. Flesh-meat is a somewhat coarse sensual food. In the beginning man ate only Lenten food. It was only after the Deluge, when mankind began to degenerate, that God allowed them to eat meat. Nourishment from plants is the food of innocence; flesh-meat is the fare of sensuality. The days on which no flesh-meat is served should remind us of the happy state of innocence in which man lived in Paradise, where he used the undefiled food of plants. We should try to return to that happy state in which the spirit ruled over the flesh.

The Christians of the first ages ate nothing during the whole day in Lent and took their only meal in the evening. Nor did they drink water unless there was a necessity for doing so. Now-a-days a full meal is permitted, either at noon or in the evening. At other meals a small collation is allowed, which is not to exceed the fourth part of an ordinary meal. The following persons are excused from the obligation of fasting: young persons under twenty-one years of age; old persons over sixty; the sick; mothers who have babies; persons engaged in hard labor; and all those who, through

weakness, cannot fast without injuring their health.

The example of the Saints of the Old and New Testaments ought to encourage us to observe the laws of fasting conscientiously. In the Old Law we read that Moses, David, Elias, Esther, the Machabees, fasted, and obtained special graces by this exercise. Jesus Himself fasted forty days in the desert. The Apostles and the Christians of all periods imitated His example. In reading the lives of the Saints we find that they not only kept the law of the Church, but also imposed voluntary fasts upon themselves.

To fast with the intention of rooting up all evil inclinations is a penitential act most pleasing to God. The Lord sent His Prophet Jonas to the wicked city of Ninive. As Jonas entered the city, he cried and said: "Yet forty days, and Ninive shall be destroyed." The men of Ninive, believing in God, proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least. The king cast away his robes and was clothed in sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published in Ninive: "Let neither men nor beasts, oxen nor sheep, taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water. And let men and beasts be covered with sackcloth, and cry to the Lord with all their strength, and let them turn every one from

his evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and forgive; and will turn away from His fierce anger, and we shall not perish!" God saw their works with regard to the evil which He had said that He would do to them, and He did it not.

During the Lenten season the Gloria, the joyful hymn of the angels, is omitted except when Mass is celebrated in honor of Saints or on festivals. Near the end of the Mass there is inserted a "prayer over the People," which was originally intended for those who did not receive Holy Communion.

The fifth Sunday of Lent is called Passion Sunday because on it the more solemn part of the penitential season begins, and after that the liturgy of the Church deals more and more with the sufferings of our Blessed Lord. To typify her increasing sorrow, the images in the churches are veiled in wrappings of purple, which is the color of penance, and they remain thus covered until the end of the services on Holy Saturday.

A certain hermit of the Thebaid had a disciple, whom he instructed in the spiritual life every evening, after which he dismissed him in order to go to rest. One day some people from a neighboring town came to the hermit and he talked with them on spiritual things until evening. When they had

gone, he began to instruct his disciple, as usual. Being very much fatigued, however, the old man was overpowered by sleep. The pupil waited till his spiritual Father should awake and dismiss him. But as the old man slept till after midnight, the disciple was tempted to awake his master, or to leave quietly and go to rest. Seven times he had this temptation, but resisted it each time. Finally, long after midnight, the old man awoke and dismissed the pupil. Afterwards, while praying, he had a vision in which he saw a beautiful seat and on it seven crowns. Asking to whom these crowns belonged, he was told that they are the property of his disciple, who had merited them by a sevenfold self-denial.

. You can do nothing better or more meritorious during Lent than exercise yourself in mortification. As often as you banish inordinate inclinations or sinful desires you gain a crown.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE HIERARCHY AND THE CLERGY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

HIERARCHY is the name given to the governing body of the Church. The essential features of the Church's government are the offices of Pope and Bishop. They were established by our Blessed Lord Himself. The other grades of the hierarchy have been determined by the Church.

The Church is a society, the congregation of all the faithful, ruled by the Pope. There is no society without authority on one side and obedience on the other. The Church has two heads; the one invisible, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who dwells in Heaven; the other visible, our holy Father, the Pope, who dwells in Rome.

The sovereignty of the Pope differs from that of the rulers of other societies. He has direct authority over all Catholics, from the most exalted prelate to the humblest layman; and he is not obliged to render an account of his administration to any human being. He is the supreme judge in matters of faith. To him belongs the right to regulate all Church discipline. He may enact laws

for the whole Church and for any part of it, and dispense from them. He can inflict censures, such as excommunications; he can reserve to himself the power of absolving from certain sins, and he alone can erect, suppress, and divide dioceses and approve new religious Orders. He can dispense from any vow, no matter how solemn or sacred.

At the present time a part of the revenue of the Holy See is provided by a yearly contribution from the faithful throughout the world. This bears the name of "Peter Pence," because in England, in Saxon times, each householder gave a penny for the Pope.

Next to the Pope come the Cardinals. They constitute the senate of the Church—the counselors of the Pontiff in many important matters pertaining to the government of the faithful.

The office of Cardinal is a dignity only; the person who holds this office has not received any new Order. It merely makes him higher in rank than other prelates. He is second to none but the Pope. He is considered equal in rank to a prince of a reigning house, and is often called a "Prince of the Church." He is responsible only to the Pope, and may be deposed by him alone. The College of Cardinals consists of seventy, and each is chosen by the Pope. The Cardinals have the right to choose a new Pope after the See has been vacant for a number of days. Their dress is a scarlet hat and

mantle, to remind them of their duty of loyalty to the Pope, even at the cost of their blood.

The bishops are the successors of the Apostles. This is the express teaching of the Vatican Council. The bishops differ from the Apostles in having a limited jurisdiction, while the mission of the Apostles was to the whole world; moreover, the Apostles had extraordinary gifts, such as infallibility, the gift of tongues and miracles. The bishops govern that portion of the Church assigned to them by the Pope and assist the Pope in the government of the Universal Church.

A bishop has the right to wear a mitre, the sign of his leadership, and to carry a crozier, which, however, is curved at the end in sign of his limited jurisdiction. He also wears a ring, symbolical of his union with the diocese, and a pectoral cross. The faithful kiss his hand, and he is addressed by the Pope as brother because as bishop he has the same rank as the Pope.

The bishops are subject to the Pope and owe him obedience. Every ten years a bishop is obliged to go to Rome to report on the state of his diocese.

Archbishops, or Metropolitans, are bishops who have power over other bishops. Some have the privilege of wearing the pallium, a white stripe of wool, which is worn on the shoulders, symbolical of gentleness and humility. The primate is a still

higher dignitary, as it were, the bishop of the whole nation.

The priests are the assistants of the bishops. They receive sacred Orders from the bishop and are his spiritual sons. Their business is to carry out the commands of the bishop.

The priests have only a portion of the episcopal power, and their office may be exercised only with the sanction of the bishop.

Over each parish the Church, in the person of the bishop, places a pastor, or rector, who is its ruler both in spiritual and temporal things, subject to the authority of the bishop and the restriction of the Church law. The parish priest is the representative of the bishop, and no one may, without his leave, exercise spiritual functions in the parish, such as preaching, baptizing, giving Extreme Unction, marrying, and burying.

Parish priests of larger districts have assistants, sometimes called *curates*.

During the French Revolution priests were hunted down like dogs. In spite of this, as imitators of their Divine Model, they went about doing good. Their most bitter enemies had a share in their charity. One of those wicked men who, during the days of the Revolution had committed the most atrocious crimes and often stained his hands with the blood of priests, fell sick. He had sworn

that no priest should ever set a foot in his room, or, if any one dared to come in by surprise, he should never permit him to depart alive. The sick man became worse and a priest was informed of the fact, as well of his hostile disposition. No matter! The good shepherd knows that he ought to give his life for his sheep. Without a moment's hesitation, the priest exposed himself to the danger. On seeing him, the sick man fell into a fury and, summoning all his strength, exclaimed in a frightful voice: "What! A priest in my house! Bring me my pistols!"

"Brother," said the priest to him, "what would you do with them? I have more powerful weapons with which to oppose you, God's charity and mercy."

"Bring me my pistols! A priest at my very side!" His pistols were refused. Then drawing out his brawny arm from the bed, and threatening the priest, he said: "Know that this arm has killed a dozen priests."

"You are mistaken, my brother," answered the priest mildly, "there is one less to be counted. The twelfth is not dead; I am he. Here," he adds showing his breast, "are the marks of the wounds that you gave me. God has preserved my life to save you." At these words he tenderly embraced him and helped him to die well.

PASSION SUNDAY

LITURGY OF HOLY WEEK

MY dear children, you have learned that the Fifth Sunday of Lent is called Passion Sunday. The gospel of to-day tells you that Our dear Lord was almost stoned to death and that He fled and His disciples with Him. The Church commemorates the great sufferings of Jesus by covering the crucifixes and statues with a purple veiling. They remain covered until Saturday of Holy Week.

During Holy Week the Church expresses her intense sorrow by many ceremonies; she calls upon the faithful to join her because of the holiness of the things then accomplished.

This Great Week begins with Palm Sunday. On several days of this Week, instead of the regular gospel the history of the Passion of Our Lord is read according to the different Evangelists.—On Sunday, according to St. Matthew; on Tuesday, according to St. Luke; on Wednesday, according to St. Mark; and on Good Friday, according to St. John. In cathedrals and monastery churches the Divine Office is chanted in public on Wednes-

day, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week. With the chanting of the Penitential Psalms, the mournful strains of the "Lamentations" and the symbolic ceremony of the extinguishing of lights, it well expresses the spirit of the Church on these days of sorrow. The service is called "Tenebrae" (darkness) and is celebrated in the evening. On a triangular frame in front of the altar are placed fourteen candles of unbleached wax, and at the upper angle one of white wax; the white candle representing Our Lord and the unbleached candles His disciples. At each of the antiphons, which occur at intervals during the recital of the psalms, a candle is extinguished to represent the flight of the Apostles after the capture of Our Lord. The six candles on the altar and the lights in the church are put out during the chanting of the "Benedictus." At the end of the service the white candle is hidden for a time behind the altar. The psalm "Miserere" is recited in a low tone, followed by a prayer; and then comes a noise, made by the clergy with their books, symbolizing the earth-quake at the death of Our Lord. The hidden candle is brought forth and replaced on the candlestick, as an emblem of the Risen Saviour.

Holy Thursday is consecrated to honoring the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. The earlier portion of the Mass of this day resembles that of a joyful feast. When the Gloria is intoned, the

organ peals forth triumphantly, the bells of the church are rung, and the whole service seems full of gladness. Suddenly there comes a change. The bells and the organ are silent, and the deepest sorrow and desolation are expressed by the remainder of the liturgy. Wooden clappers are used instead of bells.

At this Mass a second host is consecrated, to be consumed at the services on Good Friday. This Sacred Host is carried in a solemn procession to another altar, which is richly decorated with lights and flowers, inviting the faithful to adore Our Lord. The procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the altar of repose is to recall Our Lord's journey to the Mount of Olives. The stripping of the altars and the silence of the bells are signs of the Church's sympathy with her Saviour. The altar, symbolic of the body of Christ, stripped of their linens, call to mind the words of the Prophet: "They have parted my garments among them, and upon my vestures they have cast lots." This antiphon, with an appropriate psalm, is recited by the clergy.

On this day the Pope washes the feet of twelve priests,—a practice kept up since the time of Gregory the Great. The bishops and the abbots of monasteries wash the feet of twelve old men. This is done in memory of Christ's washing the feet of His Apostles before He instituted the Holy Eucharist.

On Good Friday the altar is bare, the crucifix is veiled in black, the priests wear black vestments. On entering the church the clergy prostrate themselves before the empty tabernacle. The great ceremony of this day is the so-called "Adoration of the Cross." (Catholics do not adore the cross, but simply venerate it.) The veiled crucifix is taken down from the altar and gradually uncovered. The clergy then remove their shoes—an ancient sign of reverence—and, kneeling and bowing three times, kiss the crucifix, which is placed on the altar-steps. Then the faithful come to the sanctuary rail and devoutly kiss it.

The so-called Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday is not really a Mass at all, but simply the priest's Communion. The Sacred Host, which had been consecrated on the previous day and exposed for adoration, is brought from the Repository to the main altar and incensed; wine and water are put into the chalice, the Pater Noster is said, one more prayer is recited, and then the priest receives Holy Communion. The chalice is purified, and then the service ends abruptly, and all leave the sanctuary.

PALM SUNDAY

LITURGY OF PALM SUNDAY AND HOLY SATURDAY

ON the Sunday preceding the feast of Easter Christ made a solemn entry into Jerusalem and taught in the Temple during the following days. The Church celebrates this solemn entry by the blessing of palms and by a procession. In the course of the High Mass the history of the Passion, as related by St. Matthew, is read by the celebrant and sung by the choir. During the blessing of the palms the priest prays that God may preserve from sin and danger those who receive the palms and keep them in their houses. The week following Palm Sunday is called Holy Week.

The branches that are blessed are twigs of palm, olive, willow, box, or other trees most esteemed in the country where they are found. The procession held before the Mass is of the highest antiquity in the East. The general belief is that it took rise in Palestine, whence it spread to other countries.

The prayers used by the priest in blessing the palms are full of beautiful sentiments. The ceremony takes place before the High Mass. The

celebrant wears a purple cloak, denoting penance, and reads from the Old Testament the account of the journey of the children of Israel through the desert to Mount Sinai, where they found twelve springs of water and several palm trees, and where God promised them manna from Heaven. Then comes a gospel, taken from St. Matthew, describing the entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem; this is followed by a prayer for the palm of victory. Then a preface is said or sung, asking a blessing on the palms and on those who take and keep them in a spirit of devotion; and referring to the olive branch brought by the dove to Noah in the Ark and to the palm as an emblem of triumph. After the palms have been distributed, they should be held up during the reading of the Passion of Our Lord in the Mass.

On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week, the Church continues to remind us of various events that happened before the Saviour's Passion. Holy Saturday is consecrated to the Saviour's burial. Up to Sunday morning, the time of the Resurrection, the Church continues to mourn. Her Offices are longer, but in the midst of her grief there are gleams of joy.

The services of Holy Saturday are made up of many parts. Originally these took place in the evening—not in the morning as we have them now. At these night services the Church wished to antic-

ipate the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord. In our present Holy Saturday liturgy we have the blessing of the new fire and of the Paschal Candle, the reading of the prophecies, the blessing of the baptismal font, the chanting of the Litany of the Saints, and the Mass.

The blessing of the new fire takes place at the door of the church. Appropriate prayers are used, and the grains of incense to be inserted into the Paschal Candle are blessed. A procession brings the new fire into the church, and a triple candle is lighted, one branch at a time, while the deacon chants three times in ascending tones, "The light of Christ." This ceremony goes back to about the twelfth century.

The blessing of the Paschal Candle opens with the singing of the magnificent prayer known as, "Exultet," one of the most beautiful chants in the Church's liturgy. During it the five grains of incense are inserted in the candle in the form of a cross. The five grains are an emblem of the five wounds of Our Lord and of the spices with which He was embalmed.

This candle is placed on a very high candlestick in the middle of the sanctuary before the altar. It is lighted at the Office of Holy Saturday, at Mass and Vespers during the whole Easter week, and also on Sundays and festivals until the Ascension. On this day it disappears immediately after

the Gospel at High Mass; the Saviour, rising from the earth, now returns to Heaven.

The blessing of the font means the blessing of the water to be used during the ensuing year for the Sacrament of Baptism. The priest begins by calling to mind, in a sublime preface, the wonders that God has wrought by water. Then plunging his hand into the basin, he divides the water in the form of a cross and asks God to fill it with the virtue of the Holy Ghost and to make it fruitful by grace. He afterwards pours out some drops towards the four quarters of the world to show that the whole should be bedewed with it. He breathes three times on the water to withdraw it from the power of the devil.

He sinks the Paschal Candle into the water three times. This is to show that it is by the merits of the Saviour, of whom the candle is a figure, that the water will have virtue to preserve our bodies and souls from the snares of the devil and to remit venial sins. Some of this water is poured into the baptismal font. After pouring it into the font, the priest mixes some Holy Chrism with it, which reminds us of the grace that Baptism will produce in those who will receive it.

The faithful are permitted to take some of this water home. It is used as a safe-guard against spiritual and corporal dangers.

The Mass on Holy Saturday is a joyful Mass.

It was originally the midnight Mass of Easter Sunday. Hence it is that at the Gloria the bells are rung, the organ peals forth inspiring music, the statues and pictures are unveiled, and glad Alleluias are heard again. This anticipation of the joy of Easter is still further indicated by the rule of the new Code of Canon Law which causes the Lenten fast and abstinence to end at twelve o'clock noon, on Holy Saturday. On Holy Saturday let us bury ourselves in the tomb with Our Lord; let us leave the old man, that is, our sinful habits, there, let us wash our baptismal robe in the tears of sincere repentance, so that we may be able to go to the nuptial feast of the lamb on Easter Day.

EASTER SUNDAY

LITURGY OF EASTER SUNDAY

JESUS CHRIST, Our Lord and Redeemer, is risen from the dead. This is the great, glorious mystery of this day's feast, which fills the heart of every believer with a holy joy.

Let us enter the holy temple. All the signs of mourning have disappeared. The altars are decked with extraordinary grandeur. Ornaments of gay colors and rich embroideries reappear with the sacred ministers. Every face is bright. The bells are all in motion. The people of the city arrive in crowds at the portico of the old cathedral, while those of the country throng to the door of the little village church. The song of joy, "Alleluia," resounds on all sides, is repeated every moment, is modulated into every key.

This feast is always celebrated on the first Sunday following the full moon after the vernal equinox. By the vernal equinox we understand the day on which the sun crosses the equator in spring. Easter can be no earlier than the 23rd of March, nor later than the 25th of April. But

though it may come early or late, it always falls, at least in our hemisphere, in the time of spring. This is significant and symbolizes very beautifully the mysteries of the Easter festival.

The Resurrection of Christ is the pledge of our future resurrection. At this holy time of Easter, in the thought that we shall rise again and reign we turn our gaze to the end of time and rejoice with Our Saviour in^o Heaven.

At Easter we should celebrate our spiritual resurrection. As long as man continues in sin, he is dead, and resembles winter which can bring forth no fruit. But if animated by the ray of Divine Grace, he is truly converted; he resembles spring, which awakens nature from its deadly slumber and breathes new life into it. As spring disposes all to joy, so the newly-converted Christian experiences happiness and heavenly peace.

The celebration of Easter comprises six weeks, on account of its importance, for it reminds us of the mystery which is the foundation of our faith and hope, that is, the Resurrection of Our Lord. As Christ often foretold His Resurrection from the dead, the seal of divinity is stamped on our faith.

The fruits of the Resurrection are plainly shown in the gospels of the six Sundays following Easter. In the gospel of the first Sunday after Easter, Christ gives His Apostles the power of forgiving sins. In the gospel of the second Sunday Christ portrays

Himself as the Good Shepherd. In the gospel of the third Sunday He speaks of the sufferings of His followers, which are only momentary. In the gospel of the fourth Sunday He promises to send the Holy Ghost. In the gospel of the fifth Sunday He assures us that His heavenly Father will hear our prayers and give us whatever we ask in His name. In the gospel of the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension Our Saviour renews the promise that the Holy Ghost shall come and guide the Church and preserve her to the end of time.

“Alleluia” is a Hebrew word which occurs often in the Psalms and means “Praise the Lord.” By the frequent repetition of this word we are reminded that during this time we should give unceasing praise and thanks to Our Saviour for the grace of His Resurrection.

During the Easter season the words used at the distribution of holy water are borrowed from the Prophet Ezechiel: “I saw water flow from the right side of the Temple.” This anthem is to remind us of the water of holy Baptism, by which we were cleansed from our sins, and we praise God for the gift thus conferred upon us. The anthem also reminds us of the water and blood that flowed from the side of Jesus after His heart had been pierced with a lance and which so beautifully typify the Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

During this time we recite, “Queen of Heaven

rejoice, alleluia." This is said standing, thus indicating, even by the posture of our body, that Christ has risen from the grave. Having been cleansed from our sins by the grace of the Sacraments, we should carefully avoid the occasions and dangers of relapsing; therefore, we should turn away our minds from sinful and earthly things and fill them with heavenly desires.

To perpetuate the Resurrection of the Saviour and the baptism of the catechumens, we have a procession before Mass and a sprinkling of holy water. This twofold ceremony is renewed every Sunday because all the other Sundays of the year are a continuation of the festival of Easter.

Elevate your hearts and minds to God, and remember that you are created, not for this world, but for Heaven.

Many years ago there lived in the city of Baltimore a lady who, having inherited wealth, spent the greater part of it in benefiting her fellow-creatures. Although her days were filled with prayer and charity, she had a heavy cross to bear,—one which aged her long before her time. Her only son, who had been allowed the unlimited use of money, became a prey to evil companions, whose habits were as expensive and vicious as his own.

After the death of his father the young man was restricted to a monthly allowance. This chafed

him continually, creating a breach between him and his mother. She treated him with unfailing gentleness, never ceasing to pray for her wayward son.

One evening Ernest returned home to find his mother stretched on a bed, where she had been placed by the frightened servants, who found her lying at the foot of the stairs, having made a misstep and fallen from the top to the bottom.

As the son entered the room, the mother slowly began to recover consciousness. His heart was not bad.

"Mother, darling, you must not die!" moaned the young man. "Live for me, mother! I will be good!"

"Ernest," she said, "I am leaving you, but I shall not forsake you; I shall watch over you, pray for you, and love you still. I had a presentiment of what has to come to pass. To-morrow will be Easter-Day; this morning I prepared a gift for you. It is in the corner of my top bureau drawer, wrapped in paper. Bring it to me."

The young man went to the bureau and brought back a small package. He opened it and found an old-fashioned rosary case, finely carved.

"It is an Easter egg, Ernest," the mother said; "a precious relic of my grandmother. It contains a rosary and a medal of the Blessed Virgin. Promise me that you will not open it to use the rosary or wear the medal until you have gone to con-

fession and received Our Lord in Holy Communion. Promise this to your dying mother."

"I promise, mother!" was the reply. "And it will be soon."

"With God's help,—yes," she said. "But only with His help. Remember this, without it, without fervent prayer, you can not break off in a day the habits of years."

She took his hand and drew him closer. He bent over and their lips met in a long agonized kiss. Then she lifted one trembling finger and made the sign of the Cross on his forehead, as she had been wont to do in the days of his boyhood.

The next day Ernest was an orphan. For a brief space of time he remembered his promise, but he soon went back to his evil companions. Never pausing in his downward career, he squandered the fortune he had inherited and soon was penniless. When the end came, ashamed to remain in his native city, he went to New Orleans. For several months he endured all kinds of privations, glad to perform the most menial work for the price of a bite to eat. He enlisted in the Confederate army and during the Civil War was wounded in battle, taken prisoner, and sent North. As a sick man in the army hospital, he realized for the first time the sin and folly of the past. After his recovery he had been dismissed.

One day, he had occasion to pass a certain

church, of which he had heard his mother speak, as it contained a picture of the Blessed Virgin which she had greatly admired. Feeling a desire to look at it, he entered. It hung over the side altar. Ernest knelt before it. Grace has its own seasons, and the prayers and sufferings of years were about to be answered and rewarded. Gazing at the Virgin Mother, tears filled his eyes. Since the unfortunate day when he had broken his promise, he had not said a prayer. But now it was as though he once more felt his dying mother's kiss upon his lips, that last sign of the Cross upon his forehead; and he prayed humbly and fervently.

For a long time he knelt there. A slight noise roused him; looking up, he saw a priest enter the confessional. Obeying an impulse of grace, he followed him. Half an hour later he again knelt before the altar. But this time he could look into the sweet face of the Mother of God as a man purified in the waters of sacramental absolution.

It was Easter Sunday, and, in spite of adverse circumstances, Ernest felt a peculiar lightness of heart; for his soul was now at peace. Suddenly he put his hand in an inner pocket and drew forth the rosary case to which he had clung with a peculiar affection. Since he had complied with the conditions imposed upon him by his mother he opened it.

Ernest removed the ribbon and removed the

case. It contained a small pair of beads; under them a silver medal of the Immaculate Conception, and at the bottom a bit of paper nicely folded. Ernest opened it. It was a note of deposit in a New York savings-bank for five thousand dollars, bearing interest from a period of six years before. He was no longer penniless.

His mother had kept her promise; she had not forsaken him, watching over him from her home in Paradise through all those years of sin. A mother's enduring love opening for her son a new path of spiritual blessedness and worldly prosperity.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

BAPTISMAL VOWS AND SPONSORS

IN the early days of Christianity the Sacrament of Baptism was solemnly administered on Holy Saturday; the newly baptized, in token of their baptismal innocence, wore white garments, which they solemnly took off on this Sunday, also called Low Sunday or "Sunday in white."

A beautiful custom was in vogue not many years ago. Those who had received the Sacrament of Baptism in less than a year since the last Low Sunday, assembled in church in order to solemnize the anniversary of their spiritual regeneration. The priest, in presence of their sponsors, renewed with them the promises of Baptism.

This is also a very appropriate day for you to renew your baptismal vows because, having confessed and received Holy Communion, you have recovered your baptismal innocence.

The covenant of Baptism consists principally in renouncing the devil. Therefore, the priest puts to the person to be baptized the question: "Do you renounce Satan and all his works and all his pomps?" The person to be baptized answers: "I do renounce him—I do renounce them."

To renounce Satan is nothing else than to hate and detest him, and to have nothing to do with him. The devil is the worst enemy of Jesus, and he seeks to destroy His kingdom. He is also our worst enemy. Neither must we have any companionship with his confederates. Such a confederate is the world. The world always co-operates with the devil. It urges us to indulge our evil desires and the lusts of the flesh. Our self-love is also in compact with the devil. He that is governed by self-love puts God aside and cares only for temporal things. He neglects the duties of religion in various ways, transgresses God's commandments, and burdens his conscience with many sins. Thus the world and self-love are the associates of the devil, for they pursue the same end that he pursues, the ruin of souls. To renounce the devil, therefore, means, not only to renounce him, but also to renounce the world and self-love. Ask yourselves: "Have I been under the control of the devil and given way to pride, impurity, envy, etc.? Have I preferred my own honor and will to the honor and will of God?" If you are guilty, you have broken your baptismal vows, and ought to humble yourselves before God.

You have renounced the works of the devil. By the works of the devil we understand all sins. Through Satan sin came into the world. He endeavors to lead men into sin and plunge them

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into eternal perdition. All pious Christians have ever been solicitous to keep this baptismal vow and not to offend God by mortal sin. A certain Indian in Canada who had received Baptism and after it Holy Communion, a year afterwards came again to the missionary and asked for Holy Communion. The missionary declared himself ready to comply with his wish, but told him first to confess the mortal sins which he had committed after Baptism. The poor Indian began to cry, and said: "Father, you ask me to confess my mortal sins! Can any one offend God by mortal sin after being baptized?" This poor child of the forest had lived so piously after his baptism that he had not even committed a wilful venial sin, much less a mortal one. Like this Indian, you at your baptism renounced the devil. Have you kept your promise as he did? Bewail your infidelity, humbly ask pardon of God, and promise to renounce forever the works of the devil and never again to commit a mortal sin.

At holy Baptism you renounced all the pomps of the evil one. Pride is especially mentioned among the works of the devil, because he fell through pride. It is also the vice to which the devil especially tempts men. He deceived our First Parents. Pride leads to greater sins and impairs all good works of merit for Heaven. Examine your conscience. Have you fallen by pride?

Pride impels you to seek the applause of men. You like to hear yourself praised. Vanity in dress, dressing according to the latest fashions, simply to please men, are signs of pride. If you prefer yourself before others, if you pretend to know and understand everything better than others, it is pride by which you are actuated; that is the beam in your eye.

Before the priest baptizes us we have to promise faith. We must believe, not only a part, but all that God has revealed to us, and all that He proposes to our belief by the Catholic Church. We have vowed this belief at our baptism. If we believe in the Holy Catholic Church, we must believe all that the Catholic Church proposes to our belief; our faith must be universal.

Firmness of faith is so very necessary in our days. There are numberless men who, not content with being unbelievers themselves, unceasingly labor by word of mouth and by their writings to open the way to universal unbelief. If you permit yourself to be led astray by unbelievers, you grievously sin against your baptismal vows. Have no intercourse with unbelievers and freethinkers; neither keep nor read papers hostile to the Church. Never be ashamed of your Catholic faith, always let it be seen that you are Catholics.

Our faith should manifest itself by a pious life. We must live up to what we believe. When we

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vowed faith at our baptism it was not a dead, but a living faith, which manifests itself by a faithful performance of the divine law.

Those who have not been faithful in the observance of the vows and promises which they made in baptism, will hear those terrible words: "Out of thy mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant."

Maurita, a holy deacon of Carthage, having baptized a youth named Epidophorus, had the affliction to see him afterwards become an apostate from, and even a persecutor of, the Church. Whilst this impious man, who had been raised to the dignity of a judge, was one day sitting in judgment upon the faithful, Maurita made his appearance, carrying in his hand the white garment with which he had clothed Epidophorus in baptism. Raising it up before him, he said in the hearing of the whole assembly: "Behold, O minister of error, this white garment which I have carefully preserved. It will be thy accuser and the witness of thy apostasy on the last day before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge. When thou camest from Baptism, washed and purified from thy sins, it served thee as an ornament; but hereafter it shall be to thee a garment of fire, to torment thee for all eternity!" At these words, the greater part of the bystanders were moved to tears, and Epidophorus, rising from his tribunal, retired in confusion.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

SACRED PICTURES, AGNUS DEIS, AND MEDALS

THE veneration of sacred pictures and images is as old as Christianity itself. In the Catacombs representations are found of Christ, of the Mother of God with the Divine Child, and Biblical scenes from the Old and New Testaments. All these were calculated to strengthen the Christians in time of persecution, by reminding them of God's omnipotence and of the future resurrection. With the spread of Christianity the veneration paid to images increased. Pictures, statues, and crosses were seen, not in the churches alone, but on the market-place and the highways.

The veneration of images answers to a need of our human nature; we respect the portraits of those whom we love or esteem. Moreover, it is the will of God that man, who lost true happiness for the sake of material things, should regain it by means of material things.

By sacred pictures or statues are meant representations of Christ, of the Saints, or of the truths of religion. The manner in which Our Lord is or-

dinarily depicted is familiar to all of us. The expression of His countenance is grave and benign; His eyes are blue; His hair is of a ruddy brown, curling and parted in the middle; His beard is short; and a burning heart is often placed upon His breast. The Mother of God is represented in various ways; as Help of Christians she holds the Divine Child in her arms; as Mother of Dolors, she has the dead Christ across her knees; as Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception she is, as she appeared at Lourdes, in a white robe without her infant Son. The representations of the Saints are easily recognized. They have a nimbus around the head, and are accompanied either by emblems of their office, or by the instruments whereby they suffered martyrdom.

Pictures or statues of Saints by means of which, or before which, miracles have been wrought, are called miraculous images. On the continent of Europe are a great many places of pilgrimage where an image of Our Lady is seen, by means of which extraordinary favors and graces have been obtained. Among these are Einsiedeln in Switzerland, the Grotto at Lourdes, etc. It is also well known that many cures have been effected through devotion of the Infant Jesus of Prague, especially at the time of the pestilence in 1713. Such miracles are permitted by God as a testimony of the truth of the Catholic Church, and it would be a

sin on the part of any Catholic to deny their authenticity. A strict investigation is made of these miracles by the Holy See, and then the statue of the Saint is crowned.

We honor the images of the Saints by giving them a place in our dwellings; we say our prayers before them; we salute them respectfully; we adorn them with offerings; we make pilgrimages to their shrines.

The reverence we pay to the image of a Saint is not paid to the picture or image itself, but to the individual whom it represents; that is, to Christ or some one of the Saints. When we adore the cross, we adore Him who died thereon. By showing respect to the portrait of a king we testify our respect for the monarch, and any disrespect shown to his portrait is a personal affront to himself. When the book of the Gospel is kissed, it is the Word of God therein contained that is venerated. When incense is burned, or tapers are lighted before images, it is a symbol of the light of the Holy Ghost and the virtues wherewith the Saints were endowed. It is not from the images themselves that we ask help; it is from God, through the intercession of the Saints.

Through venerating the images of the Saints, supernatural graces are obtained. The images are all useful as a means of avoiding distractions in prayer and affording us a silent admonition. St.

John Damascene says that the Holy Spirit surrounds the images of the Saints with a certain halo of grace. Wherever the cross is erected, the malicious designs of the evil one are defeated. While gazing upon an image, we pray with greater recollection; images are steps whereby we more easily ascend in spirit to Heaven. The ex-votoes hung beside the image testify to the efficacy of the Saint's intercession. Gregory the Great calls pictures "the books of the unlearned." In the Middle Ages pictures were widely circulated among the people. From those times date the crib, the sepulchre, the Stations of the Cross, etc.

Agnus Deis were always regarded as an important sacramental in the Church. The "great consecration" of the Agnus Deis takes place only the first year of each Pontiff's reign and every seventh year that follows. Certain monks prepare the pieces of wax. On the Wednesday after Easter Week these are brought to the Holy Father who, while reciting certain prayers, dips the wax into the water mingled with chrism and balsam.

The wax of the Agnus Deis is white and pure, and typifies the virgin flesh of Christ. The lamb suggests the idea of a victim offered in sacrifice. The banner signifies the victory of Our Lord over sin and death. The solemn blessing contains prayers that the Lamb of God may protect him who wears this emblem from all kinds of evil, and

that those who use the Agnus Dei may be preserved from a sudden and unprovided death.

A religious medal is a piece of metal, usually resembling a coin, cast for a commemorative purpose, or to increase devotion. We find medals of our Divine Saviour, of His Blessed Mother, and of the Saints. There is a widely used medal known as the "Miraculous Medal." It takes its origin from a vision. It is a medal of the Blessed Virgin and is used as a badge by our sodalities of the Children of Mary and of the Immaculate Conception. Many and great indulgences have been given to its wearers, and it has been an important factor in increasing devotion to the Blessed Mother of God.

Doctor Joseph Recamier, the illustrious French physician and savant, whose reputation was European, was not more eminent for his learning and ability than for his Christian faith and piety. Whenever he considered medicine ineffective, he addressed himself to the Great Healer, and he always solicited the Blessed Virgin to act as his intermediary.

One evening before concluding his night prayers, which he habitually recited in presence of his whole family before the little altar of the Immaculate Conception, he announced that he would say three "Hail Marys" for the conversion of a patient in

extreme danger. The prayers said, the aged Doctor caught hold of the chair by which he was kneeling, and, supporting himself by its means, rose to his feet. As he did so his watch-pocket came in contact with one of the chair corners. Whether from the effects of the shock or from a simple coincidence, the main-spring of the watch broke, and there followed so sharp a whirl of the broken mechanism that some one inquired:

"Why, what is that?"

"'Tis the devil running away," smilingly replied the physician.

At six o'clock the following morning Doctor Recamier arose, and shortly afterward, leaving his residence, proceeded briskly to the Rue du Bac, to inquire as to the condition of the patient for whom he had prayed. He found everybody in the house joyous and happy; the mother of the sick young man thanked the physician effusively; the youthful wife pressed his hands gratefully; and the patient himself, as soon as he saw Doctor Recamier, cried out: "Come in, Doctor; come in! I'm happy now; for I am reconciled to Him whom you serve so well."

The gratified physician was soon put in possession of the details of the conversion. It was Frederic himself who had called for a priest. It was Frederic, too, who, after having made his confes-

sion, asked for Extreme Unction and the Holy Viaticum. The Doctor congratulated his patient and acknowledged that he had secured a great many prayers for him. This announcement was the signal for further expressions of grateful joy.

Five minutes later the patient stopped in the middle of a smile to utter a profound sigh; and then—fell over dead. His mother and wife passed at once from joy to grief, from happiness to despondency; but Doctor Recamier, pointing out to them the statue of the Blessed Virgin recently placed in the apartment, reassured them: “Courage, ladies, courage! The Blessed Virgin almost miraculously prolonged his life so that he might have leisure to prepare himself for death. Frederick recoiled from the reception of the Sacraments; she caused him to desire them and ask for them himself. By the way,” he added, to make a diversion and to bring to their minds a consoling thought, “by the way, at what time did he ask for a priest?”

“At half-past nine last night, Doctor,” was the reply.

“Half-past nine!” he repeated. “Why, it was just at that hour that we finished the ‘Hail Marys’ for his conversion. I know it, for the main-spring of my watch broke just then; and here you may see that it marks that hour. Ah! my dear ladies,

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pray to our Blessed Mother; pray for the dear departed; pray well, and rest assured that God will give you all the strength of which you stand in need at so trying a time."

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

THE VENERATION OF RELICS

THE name *relics* is given to the remains of Saints and to objects that have been closely connected with Christ or the Saints.

We honor the relics of the Saints because their bodies were living temples of the Holy Ghost and because, having been the instruments of all virtues, these bodies will hereafter share in the eternal glory of their blessed souls. Holy Scripture is full of facts which show that the worship rendered to the bodies of Saints and to objects that belonged to them is most agreeable to God and advantageous to us.

The body of a Saint, or any portion of it, even the most minute particle of a bone, is a relic. Those only are authentic to which the name of a Saint and the episcopal seal are attached. The relics themselves must not be sold. From the earliest times those objects which were closely connected with our Lord or the Saints were held in high veneration; for instance, the Cross of Christ, His tunic, the manger wherein the Infant Jesus was laid. The seamless coat of Our Lord is in the Ca-

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thedral at Treves. At Argenteuil, near Paris, another garment worn by Our Lord when a child, is preserved. The holy winding sheet is in Turin; Veronica's veil is in St. Peter's at Rome. The garments worn by martyrs and the instruments of their execution have always been held in veneration.

The bodies of Saints will rise gloriously from the grave. The Jews regarded a dead body as an unclean thing, but the Christian looks upon it with respect, as having been the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost and as being the seed whence the immortal, glorified body will spring at the resurrection. God Himself shows them honor, for by them He works miracles. Many bodies, or portions of bodies, of Saints still remain incorrupt and supple. That of St. Teresa and that of St. Francis Xavier are examples. Some emit a delicious fragrance; from others there is distilled an oil possessed of healing properties. God has taken their souls to Himself and has left their bodies for us.

In his book, "The City of God," St. Augustine relates many miracles, not as having been read of in histories, or heard of from the lips of others, but as having been seen by his own eyes. "In the town of Andura," says the holy bishop, "is a district where there is a church containing a chapel of St. Stephen. Now, it happened that, as a little child was playing in a courtyard, some oxen drawing a

wagon came up and, getting off their track, rolled a wheel over the child, who was killed on the spot. Its mother, taking it up, carried it at once to the Saint's shrine, where not only its life was recovered, but even the slightest trace of injury was removed from its body."

We honor the relics of the Saints by preserving them with reverence and by visiting the spot where they are deposited. Even among the Jews relics were regarded with reverence. At the exodus from Egypt Moses took Joseph's bones with him. The early Christians also had great respect for relics. When St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was torn to pieces by lions, two of his companions came by night and gathered up his bones, carrying them to Antioch. When St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was burned alive, the Christians collected his ashes, valuing them more than jewels. Relics of great value, such as portions of the true Cross, or of the manger of Bethlehem, are encased in gold and silver; likewise, some of the bodies of the Saints.

However precious the stones and metals which were employed to ornament the churches of the glorified servants of God, and particularly their altars, nothing else was deemed so precious as their sacred remains; and their tombs were regarded as the most worthy spots upon which to celebrate the holy mysteries of religion. As the number of Christians increased, it happened that churches

were needed in localities where no martyrs were buried. Whenever a church was erected in a locality where there was no tomb of a martyr, some relics of martyrs were taken from elsewhere and transferred to the new church and deposited in the altar. The small square cavity in the top slab of the altar, into which the relics are put, is called the sepulchre.

Relics are a source whence spiritual benefits come to us from God. Where the remains of Saints and martyrs are interred, the snares of the devil lose their power and obstinate maladies are healed. Even in their lifetime, the bodies of the Saints were instrumental in working miracles. By the shadow of St. Peter and by the girdles worn by St. Paul, the sick were delivered from their infirmities. But it must be remembered that it is not by the relics themselves that these miracles are wrought. It is God who works the miracles in proof of the sanctity of His Saints.

In the city of Uzales, in Africa, there lived a man whose name was Concordius. One day his leg was broken by a fall, and from that time forward he was not able to walk without a crutch. Hearing of the wonders that were wrought by the relics of St. Stephen, he dragged himself to a church, where some of these relics were preserved. There he prayed with great devotion. Suddenly

in the midst of his prayers he felt his leg healed, and, rising up, was able to walk without the help of his crutch. In thanksgiving to the Saint for his cure he caused a number of candles to be lighted before the shrine, and going out, published everywhere the wonderful works of God in His Saints. (St. Augustine.)

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

VESTMENTS AND SACRED VESSELS

IN the Old Law God wished that the priests and Levites, when immolating victims, should wear specially consecrated vestments. The Church, inheriting ancient traditions, wished that her ministers also should wear a peculiar and sacred dress in the exercise of their sublime functions. The respect due to holy things, both by the priests and the faithful, calls for it. Besides, have not men always need of outward and sensible signs which remind them of the invisible greatness of mysteries? Hence, the use of sacerdotal garments reaches back to the Apostles.

Whatever is excellent in the world comes from God. "Gold and silver are mine," saith the Lord; and what nobler use can be made of them than to employ the things God made in worshiping the Creator who gave them to us as a present.

He who is granted an audience with an earthly monarch arrays himself in full dress out of respect to that monarch; so the priest when he appears before the King of kings at the altar, is arrayed in suitable vestments. These vestments show that he

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does not act of his own power, but as the representative of Christ.

The vestments which the priest wears in the celebration of the Mass are the amice, the alb, the girdle, the maniple, the stole, the chasuble. The amice is a white linen cloth laid about the head and shoulders. Formerly it used to be placed over the head like a hood, to keep the priest from distractions at Mass. The alb is a white linen garment, reaching from head to foot. In the East it was customary to wear a white robe on festive occasions, as when invited to a wedding. The girdle is a cord which fastens the alb so that it may not inconvenience the priest in walking. The maniple was at first a linen cloth, which was worn on the left arm, representing the cloth wherewith Our Lord's countenance was wiped. The stole is a long band of silk, which hangs from the neck and is crossed on the breast. It is the special sign of the priestly office; therefore, the priest wears it whenever he exercises any sacred function. The chasuble is a garment which hangs from the shoulders, reaching down to the knees. In early times it was a kind of mantle, with only one opening, through which the head was passed. When officiating at a service other than Mass, the priest wears a cope, or short alb, called a surplice. At high Mass the deacon and subdeacon use special vestments, called dalmatics.

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The various portions of the priestly vestments are little mementoes of Our Lord's Passion, and they also serve to remind the priest of the duties of his office. The amice represents the cloth with which the soldiers muffled Our Lord's face when they struck Him; the alb signifies the white robe in which Herod arrayed Him in mockery; the girdle, the cords with which He was bound; the maniple, Veronica's handkerchief; the stole, the rope laid about Our Lord's neck after His condemnation; the chasuble, on the back of which is a cross, represents the cross which He bore on His shoulders.

The principal things that are used in saying Mass are the chalice, the paten, and the Missal.

"And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying; 'Drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood of the New Testament.'" These words show us why the priest uses a cup, or chalice—because He who gave us the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass made use of one when He instituted that wonderful mystery. When the Apostles followed His command to "do this for a commemoration of Me," they also used a cup. In the course of centuries it became customary to have the chalice formed of costly metal, and oftentimes it was adorned with precious stones. The upper part of the chalice must be of gold, or of silver with gilt on the inner part. The paten is a small plate

whereon the Sacred Host is laid. It must be of the same material as the chalice. Both chalice and paten must be blessed by the bishop. The Missal contains the prayers that are said in every Mass. At the beginning and at the end of Mass the chalice is shrouded in a "chalice veil" of the same material and color as the vestments of the Mass. Upon this veil rests the burse, a flat pouch, in which the corporal is kept. The corporal is a square linen cloth which, during Mass, is spread on the altar to receive the Host and chalice. It represents the winding sheets in which the body of Christ was wrapped for burial. The ciborium somewhat resembles a chalice. In it the consecrated Hosts are reserved for the Communion of the faithful. The monstrance is used in giving Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and in processions it serves as a receptacle in which the Host is carried publicly.

How greatly the beauty of God's House impresses the beholder and conduces to devotion! It is just and right to give what is precious and beautiful for the service of God. Why should the House of God be less richly ornamented than the mansions of the rich?

In a solemn high Mass there are two sacred ministers who assist the priest during the holy mysteries; the one on the right is called the deacon, the one on the left the subdeacon. The deacon chants the Gospel, and dismisses the people at the end

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of Mass by intoning: "Ite, missa est." His vestments are the amice, alb, girdle, stole, and dalmatic. The dalmatic was originally worn at Dalmatia, whence it was brought to Rome. It is a long and ample garment, with very large but short sleeves, descending only to the elbow. At first it was a vestment worn by the emperors of Rome; the Church adopted it for the sovereign Pontiff and the bishops. The deacons received it from Pope Sylvester to be worn on festival days as a sign of joy. It was laid aside during Advent, Lent, and fast-days, periods of sadness and mourning in the Church. The dalmatic is of the same color as the chasuble of the priest.

The deacon does not wear the stole in the same manner as the priest; he places it on the left shoulder, and brings the extremities under the right arm.

The subdeacon has to prepare the sacred vessels, the bread and wine of the sacrifice, give the water to the celebrant when he washes his hands, and reads the epistle. His vestments are the amice, alb, girdle, maniple, and tunic. The tunic was formerly distinguished from the dalmatic by its form and material; now it is in all respects like it.

The ministers who carry the candles, prepare the incense, and serve the subdeacon and deacon at the altar, are called *acolytes*. "Samuels of the New Law," they always wear in their functions a linen

robe. They minister as angels upon the earth. Their white vestments with flowing sleeves with which they are adorned resembling two wings; the censer swinging in their hands; their comings and goings in the sanctuary:—do they not recall the celestial spirits around the throne of the Lamb? The white vestment of the acolyte is called a surplice, and covers a cassock, generally black. In the vestments worn by the priest at Mass the Church makes use of five colors—white, red, green, purple, and black.

White is emblematic of innocence and purity; it is used on the feasts of Our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin, of the Angels, and of Confessors. Red is the color used at Pentecost and on the feasts of the martyrs. Green is used on the Sundays after Epiphany and after Pentecost, on which nothing special is commemorated. Purple is used in Advent and Lent, and upon Vigils and Ember days. Black is used on Good Friday and at Masses for the dead.

Let the white vestment remind you that the Church calls on you to strive after holiness; let the sight of the red kindle in you the love of God; let the green bid you raise your heart and fix your hopes on Heaven. The purple will remind you that you must do penance; the black will recall the thought of death.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

THE USE OF INCENSE

INCENSE has always been taken as a proper symbol of prayer and of our ardent desire that our prayer should rise in the sight of God as a sweet perfume. Could there be a symbol more expressive? The incense rises up only through the activity of the fire that sends it forth; and our prayers, which are really but the desires of our hearts, cannot ascend to God if they are not animated by the fire of divine love. What rises from the censer is of good odor; a touching lesson, which tells us to preserve our souls so that nothing may issue thence but what is pleasing to God. All the incense is consumed; all rises in smoke; so all our desires should tend to God; none should rest on the earth.

The incense burnt during the holy mysteries is like a holocaust offered to God. We testify thereby that all creatures should be engaged in His service and consumed for His glory.

The incense burnt at the altar, spreading its perfume through the church, is a figure of the good odor of Jesus Christ, which spreads from the altar

to the souls of the faithful. The holy Fathers tell us that the censer represents the humanity of Christ, the fire of His divinity, and the smoke of His grace.

Full of these mysterious and sublime ideas, the early Christians had so much veneration for the incense burnt in church that they strove to breathe its odor, saying what the priest still says at the present day: "May the Lord kindle in us the fire of His love and the flame of eternal charity."

During a solemn Mass the upper part of the altar and its three sides are incensed. The altar is incensed because it is a figure of Our Lord Jesus Christ; the holy Gospel, because it contains the words of Jesus Christ; the priests and deacons, because they are ministers of Jesus Christ; the relics of the saints, because they are precious remains of the members of Jesus Christ; the choristers, that is to say, those who sing the praises of God, because they are in a manner the instruments of which the Church makes use to render the homage of prayer to the Eternal Father, through Jesus Christ; the faithful themselves, because they are brethren of Jesus Christ, a people bought at a great price.

Among all people, especially in the Orient, incensing was a mark of honor. To do honor to a person, the room in which he was received was perfumed, and sweet-smelling oil was poured on his head. Among the presents that Jacob sent Joseph

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in Egypt were perfumes, and the Queen of Saba did homage to Solomon by offering him a large quantity of the most exquisite perfumes.

The use of incense is very ancient. One of the great functions of the priests of the Old Law was to burn incense on the altar of perfumes. The Catholic Church in adopting the use of incense only practiced under the Gospel what had been commanded under the Law.

The Saviour Himself taught the Church by His example that the offering of incense is pleasing to God. Among the presents that He inspired the Magi to lay at His feet, frankincense is especially mentioned. Later on the Son of Man, invited to dine at the house of the Pharisees, complained that no one had perfumed His head, as was done with persons who were guests of honor. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, did not fail in this matter on a like occasion. She took a pound of ointment of ripe spikenard, of great price, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with her hair; and the home was filled with the odor of the ointment.

From the first ages the Church used incense; and we see Constantine making presents of golden censers to churches, to be employed during the celebration of the holy mysteries.

Incense is used in solemn Masses at the Introit, the Gospel, the Offertory, and the Elevation. The

priest says the following prayer: "Mayest thou be blessed by Him in whose honor thou shalt be consumed." At the Offertory the celebrant prays: "May this incense, blessed by Thee, ascend to Thee, O Lord; and may Thy mercy descend upon us." Having ascended the altar, the priest incenses the crucifix and the relics of the Saints, as a sign of respect. Then he swings the censer over the altar, on either side of the tabernacle, towards the candles because these are a symbol of the Apostles, who were sent by Christ into the world in order to carry to all men the light of the Gospel. He next incenses the altar, as an emblem of the prayers which are now directed to God by the celebrant and the assembled faithful. Finally, the priest is himself incensed by the deacon, both as a mark of respect and an admonition to let his prayers ascend to God, as the incense rises towards heaven. Incense is used at the Gospel and again at the Offertory. The celebrant first incenses the offerings of bread and wine to express the desire that these, in union with the prayers of the faithful, might become an acceptable sacrifice before God. The ministers at the altar and the clergy that may be present in the sanctuary are also incensed, to remind them that they are to assist at the Holy Sacrifice with due recollection and devotion. At the Elevation incense is likewise used, but here it ex-

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presses the adoration of the faithful toward the Blessed Sacrament. This is the symbolic signification of incense whenever used in connection with the Holy Eucharist.

SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION

LITURGY OF THE HOLY OILS

THE Blessing of the Holy Oils takes place on Holy Thursday. In cathedral churches the bishop alone says Mass. It is during this Mass, as has been the custom since the eleventh century, that the magnificent ceremony of the Blessing of the Oils takes place,—a ceremony which, in the main, comes down to us from Apostolic times. In vain shall we look for anything more solemn and instructive.

The ceremony of the Blessing of the Oils is full of significance. It requires the presence of a large number of clergy, for the sacred oils are considered by the Church to be of such importance as to call for extraordinary pomp.

Olive oil has always been a necessity of daily life, much more in European countries than in our own. It not only enters into the preparation of food, but it is also a remedy, taken internally and used externally. Once upon a time it was burned in lamps to furnish light. The symbolical meaning of which the Church takes cognizance in using

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it is that oil is a spiritual nourishment, to cure our spiritual ailments, to diffuse the light of grace in our souls, and to render us strong and active in the conflict with Satan. The Church employs oil not only to anoint living beings, but also for bells and chalices and other lifeless things which are to be used as aids in the sanctification of her children.

On the day of the blessing of the oils, the deacons and subdeacons bring large urns, which they place before the bishop. These urns are filled with the oils that are about to be sanctified and blessed,—holy oils intended for young people who have just been born; for sick people who are dying; for priests who are to be dedicated to God; for kings who are consecrated and crowned; holy oils which flow upon us at our entrance into this world and our departure from it,—holy chrism at Baptism and Confirmation, and the last anointing at death.

On this occasion the bishop is surrounded by twelve priests in white chasubles. The twelve priests remind us of the Apostles who surround their Divine Master. Besides this, there are present seven deacons and seven subdeacons in white dalmatics. Certain prescribed prayers and the sign of the cross are used in blessing the oils, to remind us that the death of Our Lord upon the cross is the source of all blessings for us. The bishop and the twelve priests breathe upon the oil to indicate that by the unction with the oil we re-

ceive the Holy Ghost, as Christ imparted the Holy Spirit to His Apostles by breathing upon them. Balsam, a sweet-smelling resinous substance, is mixed with chrism. This is to teach us that just as balsam is soothing and strengthening for the body, so through the sacraments our souls are healed and fortified. It teaches us, too, that by means of the Sacraments we are to become pleasing in the sight of God,—a grateful odor, as it were, like that of the balsam, which is prized for its fragrance. It teaches us, finally, that by the reception of these means of grace we may preserve our souls from the infection of sin, in the same manner as we use balsam to preserve the bodies of the dead from corruption. The blessing being ended, the bishop and the twelve priests salute the oil by singing: "Hail, holy oil! Hail, holy chrism!" By this they express the joy of the faithful because the Redeemer has instituted the Sacraments, in the administration of which these holy oils are used, and by which, through the grace of God, we are cleansed from sin and fortified for a life of holiness.

The blessing of oil is recorded in the rituals of very early times. Even as far back as the fourth century two kinds of oil were solemnly blessed on Holy Thursday for sacramental uses, one being pure and the other mixed with balsam; the first was what we call the Oil of the Catechumens, and

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the other was the Chrism. The third kind, the Oil of the Sick, was consecrated by a more simple formula and it was customary to have this oil blessed as needed by priests. This custom has been dropped among us and the Church law requires the blessing by a bishop.

In each parish church the consecrated oils are kept with great care and reverence, being enclosed in suitable metallic bottles, which are preserved in a locked box affixed to the wall of the sanctuary.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

THE word Confirmation is from the Latin *confirmare*, which signifies "to make strong, firm, or steadfast." This Sacrament is called Confirmation because, by virtue of this holy mystery, the baptized person receives the grace and strength of the Holy Ghost to persevere steadfast in the faith, and resolutely and fearlessly to confess it before the world. Christ commanded His disciples to remain in Jerusalem after His Ascension, "till they should be endued with the power on high."

Our Lord had given the Holy Spirit to His Apostles before His Ascension, yet they were timid and fearful and did not lose their timidity until the day of Pentecost, when the plenitude of the Spirit was poured out upon them. We received the Holy Ghost at our Baptism, but not in all fullness; this we received at Confirmation.

Oil is used in Confirmation to indicate the effects of the Sacrament. As in ancient times the bodies

of the gladiators and wrestlers were anointed with oil to make them supple and more apt for the contest, so by the grace of Confirmation the soul is strengthened and made fit to fight against the temptations which menace the faith, or an upright Christian life. In connection with the oil we may also think of the olive branch brought by the dove to the Ark of Noe, as a sign that the waters had receded from the earth and the wrath of God was appeased. From the time of the deluge the olive branch has been universally adopted as the symbol of peace and good will. In Confirmation the Holy Ghost comes down upon us to make us pleasing to God, to change us into an agreeable habitation of God. Where God is, there is peace. The oil used in Confirmation is mixed with balsam and called chrism. The balsam which has a sweet smell denotes the good odor, or sweet fragrance, of a life of virtue and innocence, by which we are to edify our neighbor.

Confirmation increases our charity towards God and our neighbor; in other words, it increases sanctifying grace and imparts to us the fullness of the Divine Spirit. By Confirmation our thoughts and aspirations are directed towards Heaven; from being earthly, man becomes heavenly; from being sensual, he becomes spiritual,—a perfect Christian. Confirmation strengthens the will. It makes it easier for the Christian to resist temptation and

thus avoid sin. The stronger the will, the less difficult does the practice of virtue become.

The bishop anoints the forehead with chrism to express that the Christian should put off all human respect and fearlessly profess his religion by word and deed, being mindful of the consoling, yet terrible words of the Saviour: "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father." (Matt. x, 32.) For this reason the unction is made in the form of a cross. Through Confirmation the Christian is enlisted as a soldier of Christ, with the characteristic mark of his Lord and King, the cross of the Redeemer, on the most prominent part of the body.

Another essential in the administration of Confirmation is the imposition of hands by the bishop, after the manner of the Apostles. The bishop, extending his hands towards those who are to be confirmed, prays that they may receive the Holy Ghost. The imposition of hands denotes that the person confirmed stands under the special protection of God and under the providing care of the Holy Ghost. It was not enough that we were made children of God and heirs of His manifold gifts by Baptism, but it was also necessary, by the imposition of the hands in Confirmation, to impart to us the Holy Ghost as comforter and protector, that we might be safe, under the shield of His protection, against the assaults of Satan, and

not again lose the precious graces of baptism, particularly the gift of faith.

A slight blow on the cheek is given by the bishop to remind the person to be confirmed that he must henceforth be prepared to suffer patiently every affront or injury for his religion's sake, after the example of the Apostles, who went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were found worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.

It is a grievous sin wilfully to neglect to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. To do this would be to act like a traveller who, having to pass along a dangerous road, refused to accept the means of defence offered him. What wonder if he has to pay a high price for his folly? Although Confirmation is not absolutely necessary for salvation, yet God severely punishes contempt for this Sacrament. In early times parents who neglected to have their children confirmed had to do penance for three years.

To receive this Sacrament one must be in the state of grace. Confession and Communion should precede Confirmation. To receive this Sacrament in mortal sin would be like pouring a precious and delicate substance into an unclean vessel.

The person confirmed receives the name of some Saint, who is to be his model in the spiritual warfare, his pattern on earth, and his intercessor in Heaven.

The person to be confirmed must have a godfather or a godmother. In all the difficulties of life the godparent ought to be ready to support and help the godchild; he ought to do his utmost to induce him to keep within the paths of virtue; and the godchild ought to feel that he must not rely too much on his own powers, but must seek counsel from others. A spiritual relationship exists between the two, which constitutes an ecclesiastical hindrance to marriage.

St. Martin of Tours, whilst yet a youth, once travelled over the Alps and fell into the hands of robbers, one of whom drew his sword and held it suspended over his head, as if about to inflict a mortal blow. He would, indeed, have done so, had not his companion stayed his hand. The holy youth showed no fear, but recommended himself loudly to God. The robbers, struck with astonishment at his calmness and self-possession in such imminent danger, asked him who he was, and whether he was not filled with fear at the sight of the sword uplifted to slay him? He replied that he was a Christian and that he had no fear, because he knew that Divine Providence is always ready to protect us both in life and death, and it is never nearer to us than when we are exposed to the greatest dangers. He added that his only subject of grief was, that the robbers, by the lives they led,

deprived themselves of the mercy of God. The robbers listened to him with astonishment and admired the courage and confidence in God which virtue inspires. His fervent words made a deep impression upon their hearts, and he who had attempted to kill him became a Christian, and, entering a monastery, led henceforth a life of devotion and penance.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE BLESSED TRINITY AND THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

THERE is no mystery of our holy religion, of which the Church reminds us so frequently as that of the Blessed Trinity. Whenever we make the sign of the cross we name the three Divine Persons. Whenever we receive a Sacrament, we do so in the name of the Blessed Trinity. The Pope, the bishops, and the priests never bless the faithful otherwise than in the name of the Holy Trinity.

In the Old Law benedictions and blessings were frequently given. God Himself blessed all things that He created. He blessed Abraham, and in many passages of Sacred Scripture we read that God blessed other men. The Angels also blessed in the Old Law. Jacob would not let the Angel go until he had blessed him. The blessing which Noe gave to his sons, Sem and Japhet, that which Isaac gave to Jacob, Jacob to his sons, Moses to Josue, and David to the people, was a blessing which had for its foundation the hope of a future Redeemer.

In the New Law Jesus blessed bread and fishes; He blessed bread and wine before He changed them into His flesh and blood at the Last Supper; He blessed the children who were brought to Him, and His disciples immediately before His Ascension into Heaven. The Apostles followed the example of their Master.

Whenever the Church dedicates and blesses, she does it in the name of the Holy Trinity. By the power and the authority of the Church the bishops and priests dedicate and bless various things, such as churches, cemeteries, altars, bells, candles, vestments, etc.; also persons, such as kings, religious, and the sick. Pious lay people bless themselves and their children. Pious Christians bless themselves in the morning and evening with the sign of the cross.

The blessing of the Holy Trinity by the sign of the cross has wonderful power. St. John and St. Benedict blessed poisoned wine which had been offered them to drink, and they drank without receiving injury. St. Martin blessed a fire that had broken out, and it was immediately extinguished. St. Vincent Ferrer often drove away violent lightning by his blessing. St. Hilarion blessed the grapes on a vine, of which there were but a few, and immediately the vine became full of grapes. St. Eligius often multiplied wine by his blessing;

St. Jordan did the same with bread, and St. Severin with oil.

We sign ourselves with the sign of the cross to confess publicly that we believe in Christ, true God and true man, who redeemed us through the cross. Furthermore, to show that we are not ashamed of the crucified Son of God, but ready to confess Him fearlessly before friend and foe. By the sign of the cross we express the wish and prayer that, through the merits of the crucified Saviour, we may be preserved from all evils of body and soul, and that, in view of the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross, our daily labors may prosper and become meritorious in the sight of God. By the sign of the cross we gratefully call to mind the ineffable blessing of the Redemption, which came to us through the cross.

We distinguish two signs of the cross; the small and the large or Latin cross. We make the sign of the cross first on the forehead. As the forehead is openly shown, and no one conceals his face, we declare our readiness to make by our works an open profession of the teachings of the Gospel. We make the sign of the cross, secondly, upon our lips, to indicate that we are prepared to confess Catholic doctrine by word of mouth before friend and foe, and, if need be, to defend them. We finally make the sign of the cross upon the chest because

the heart governs our works. We dedicate to the Blessed Trinity our thoughts words and actions.

The large or Latin cross is distinguished from the small one by its being made from the forehead to the breast, and from one shoulder to the other, which makes it a great deal larger than the cross made with the thumb. It is called the Latin cross because it is prescribed for divine worship, which is performed in Latin, and the words used in making the sign of the cross are likewise said in that language.

At the end of Mass the priest blesses the people with the sign of the cross. This is done to impart to the assembled faithful the rich blessings of grace which Christ gained for us by His death upon the Cross.

The sign of the cross is a salutary sign. It protects us from the assaults of the spirit of darkness. Julian the Apostate one day entered a pagan temple in company with a noted idolator. The latter invoked the demons, who at once made their appearance. Julian became alarmed and, forgetting for a moment that he had renounced the Christian religion, made the sign of the cross, as he had formerly been accustomed to do when danger was near. Immediately the infernal spirits disappeared. So powerful and efficacious was the sign of the cross, even when made by a renegade Christian.

The sign of the cross is a powerful means against

all natural evils, as history proves. The death of Julian the Apostate was followed by a tremendous earthquake all over the East. The rivers overflowed their banks. At the sight of these prodigies the inhabitants of Epidaurus went to St. Hilarion and, with tears in their eyes, besought him to have pity on them and come to their aid. They took him to the seashore. There St. Hilarion knelt on the sand, prayed with fervor, and made the sign of the cross three times over the troubled waters. Immediately there followed a great calm. All the people of Epidaurus witnessed the miracle, and for many years after, they ceased not to remember it with gratitude.

We finish the sign of the cross with the word "Amen," which means, "so be it." With this word we assert that we believe the mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity and of the Redemption and everything that Christ has taught us.

St. Martin one day having overthrown, in Burgundy, a famous and very ancient temple, he wished likewise to cut down a large pine-tree that stood near it. But to this he found the pagans entirely opposed; but they told him that since he had so much confidence in his God, they would cut down the tree themselves, provided he would stand under it when it fell. Martin accepted the condition, and allowed himself to be tied on the

side to which the tree was already inclining. A great crowd of people assembled to see the sight. The tree, half cut, began to fall upon him, when he simply made the sign of the cross; the pine, as if blown by a gust of wind, fell to the other side, on those of the spectators who thought themselves safest. There arose a great cry, and a large number of idolators embraced the faith of Christ.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF THE CEREMONIES OF HOLY COMMUNION

TO-DAY our attention will be fixed on the most sublime of all the Sacraments, namely, the Holy Eucharist, or the mystery of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, present under the appearances of bread and wine.

It was pride, avarice, and impurity that caused so many Jews to refuse the invitation of Our Lord to enter the Church; it is the same vices that keep many Christians away from Holy Communion. Some being proud, others being victims of lust, they have lost all desire for higher things, and, like the Israelites longing for the fleshpots of Egypt, they despise the heavenly manna. To encourage you to approach the holy Altar as often as possible, we shall explain the ceremonies of Holy Communion.

Holy Communion is given in the following manner: The acolyte serving at Mass, in the name of those who are about to receive, recites the general confession known as "Confiteor" from the word with which it begins. You are already familiar with

it. It is as follows: "I confess to Almighty God, to Blessed Mary ever Virgin, to Blessed Michael the Archangel, to Blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to you, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my exceeding great fault. Therefore, I beseech the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, Blessed Michael the Archangel. Blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, all the Saints, and you, Father, to pray to the Lord Our God for me." In this confession of sins there is expressed at the same time, as you see, a prayer for pardon and remission.

Mention is first made of the Blessed Virgin, as the Queen of all Saints. Then follows the name of the Archangel Michael, and in his person we make, as it were, a confession of our sinfulness to all the Angels, and implore their intercession. We do the same before all the Saints.

St. John the Baptist represents the Saints of the Old and the Apostles Peter and Paul, those of the New Law. As we cannot briefly call upon all by name, we select one from each class to represent all the others, and in conclusion add the words: "And all the saints."

The priest recites the so-called "Absolution," that is to say, after the communicants have acknowledged themselves as sinners before him,

and have asked for his prayers, he says: "May Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you and your sins, and bring you to everlasting life. Amen." "May the almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, absolution, and remission of all your sins. Amen."

This is not the sacramental absolution, but only an intercessory prayer which may remove from the soul venial sins and imperfections, provided the communicants have the proper disposition. This prayer is an exhortation and an admonition to the communicants, on part of the priest, to excite themselves to sorrow and contrition, in order to approach with greater humility and purity the banquet of the Lord. Hence he shows the adorable Host to the communicant, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world." Then the priest thrice repeats the words: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak only the word, and my soul shall be healed." These words are said that the communicants may excite in their hearts the sentiments of humility with which the Most Holy Redeemer is to be received. After this the priest distributes Holy Communion, making the sign of the cross with the consecrated particle upon each person and saying to each: "The Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto everlasting life. Amen."

At each Holy Communion endeavor to weigh well the beautiful teachings and admonitions of the priest, and thus render yourselves worthy of this heavenly Food.

In this connection let me also tell you in what manner Holy Communion is given to the sick.

In Catholic countries the Blessed Sacrament is carried to the sick with religious solemnity. The priest is robed in surplice and stole, and is attended by acolytes bearing torches, and usually a number of the faithful attend. On entering the house of the sick person, the priest says: "Peace be to this house and to all that dwell herein." Then he repairs to the room in which the sick person lies, and places the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament, upon a table covered with a clean white cloth; upon which, between two burning wax candles, stands a crucifix. Besides this, there should be a cup filled with holy water, a tumbler with clear water, and a spoon. The priest now sprinkles the sick person and the room with holy water saying: "Sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." "Have mercy O Lord, according to Thy great mercy. Glory be to the Father, etc." "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made Heaven and earth. O Lord, hear my prayers, and let my cry come unto Thee. The Lord be with you and"

with His spirit." Then he adds the following beautiful prayer: "O Holy Lord, Almighty, everlasting God, graciously hear us and vouchsafe to send Thy holy angels from Heaven to guard, cherish, protect, visit, and defend all who dwell in this habitation. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen." The remaining prayers are the same as when Communion is given in church. But when it is given by way of preparation for death, the priest says: "Receive, brother (or sister), the Viaticum of the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who may guard thee from the wicked enemy and bring thee to everlasting life. Amen." After having given Holy Communion to the sick person, the priest adds another prayer.

When we are not sick, we receive Holy Communion in the morning. The reason is because then our thoughts are more collected than in the evening, when, by reason of the manifold affairs of the day, the mind is likely to be distracted. We fast because it is a fitting expression of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, to receive it before we have taken any ordinary food.

Two children went with tin cans to a river to fetch water. One child brought back a great deal more water than the other. What was the reason? It was because the one child had a much larger

can than the other. Two persons go to Holy Communion. One comes back with far more blessings in his soul than the other. What is the reason? Because the one made a much better preparation than the other.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF THE USE OF CANDLES AND LAMPS

THE sight of candles takes us back eighteen hundred years to the time of the persecution, to the very cradle of Christianity. It takes us back even much farther, for the use of lights at divine worship is traceable to the time of the Mosaic Law.

Lamps were employed to banish darkness, but also to manifest joy and gratitude on account of the benefits bestowed by God. They were also figures of Our Lord, the true light of the world. "We never celebrate the holy mysteries," says an ancient writer, "without using tapers. It is not to banish the darkness of the night, since we may say Mass in broad daylight, but to represent Him who is the Uncreated Light, without whom we would grope at noon."

Obliged to shun the light of the sun, our ancestors supplanted it by lamps and torches in the subterranean places that so long served them as retreats and temples. Their lamps are found by thousands in the Catacombs.

On the second of February the Church celebrates

the Festival of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. This day has been chosen for a very important ceremony, the solemn blessing of candles, whence the day is often called Candlemas,—the Mass of the candles. This solemnity was to withdraw the Christians from the superstitions and vices of the pagans and turn their eyes to Christ. The Roman people, when pagan, had been accustomed to carry lights in processions in honor of one of their deities; and the Church, instead of trying to blot out entirely the memory of this pagan festival, changed it into a Christian solemnity, thereby honoring the Blessed Mother of God.

The reasons why candles are blessed and carried in solemn procession on this day, are as follows: First to remind us that the Incarnate Son of God is the true light that came into the world to enlighten all men, and that on this day He was carried by His Virgin Mother to the Temple and presented as an offering to His Heavenly Father. Secondly, this ceremony brings to our minds the moment when the aged Simeon folded the Divine Child in his arms and with holy joy exclaimed: "Now my eyes have seen the Light which enlightens all nations!" This Divine Light has likewise been revealed to our eyes, and we, too, should fondly enclose Christ Jesus in our hearts. Thirdly, the burning candles which we hold in our hands are to recall to us the words of Our Saviour: "Let your

loins be girded, and lamps burning in your hands;" and again, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." It is our duty as Christians to show to all men, but more particularly those subject to us, the light of good example. Finally, the pure wax from which the candles are made, represents to us the pure humanity of Christ; the cleanly bees, which prepare the wax, symbolize Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, in whose pure womb the humanity of Christ was prepared by the Holy Ghost. All this is indicated by the prayers which the Church employs at the blessing of the candles.

The prayers which are used in this blessing are beautiful, and they express well the mind of the Church and the symbolic meaning of the candles. God, the Creator of all things, who by the labor of the bees has produced this wax, and who on this day fulfilled His promise to Blessed Simeon, is besought to bless and sanctify these candles, that they may be beneficial to His people for the health of their bodies and souls, and that the light of His grace may dispel the darkness of sin in their souls.

Candles are used at the administration of all the Sacraments except penance. They are lighted at Mass and other church services, at the imparting of certain blessings, in processions, and on various other occasions.

The use of votive candles has become very general in our churches. These are not blessed candles, and are, therefore, not sacramentals. They are commonly placed in large numbers in a candle-holder of special form before some statue or shrine. Tapers lighted before images are symbols of the light of the Holy Ghost and of the virtues wherewith the Saints were endowed.

The purpose of burning a candle is merely to give honor and to manifest devotion to the Saint before whose image the candle is lighted.

The faithful look upon blessed candles as among the most efficacious of the sacramentals. Every Catholic home should have one or more, to be used when the Sacraments are administered. It is a beautiful and pious custom to place in the hand of the dying Catholic a blessed candle, the light of which is an image of the faith which he professed before the world.

Lamps in our churches have had a sacred character from very early times. It is a general law that a lamp should be burning always before the Blessed Sacrament, wherever it is reserved. This lamp is known as the sanctuary lamp. The oil used in it must be olive oil. In our country the use of cotton-seed oil is permitted.

It is a pious custom to keep lamps burning elsewhere in our churches—before altars and images of the Saints, and before their relics. In many

European churches such lights are found in great profusion, and the shrines of favorite Saints are often illuminated with hundreds of them.

What lesson shall we draw from the candle? The flame burns upward: raise your eyes towards heaven. If you light a candle it decreases little by little and consumes itself. Thus it is with life. The very moment we are born, we begin to die; daily a part of our life is cut off. Be solicitous for a happy end. By a good example edify your fellow-men and encourage them to virtue.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OUR BLESSED LADY'S LIVERY

OUR Blessed Lady's livery is the scapular, which consists of two pieces of woolen cloth, about two inches wide and three inches long, so connected by two bands that when they rest upon the shoulders, one piece hangs at the breast and the other at the back. On each half of the scapular pictures or emblems are sewed or printed. Some of the faithful may imagine that the picture is the scapular, or at least adds to its efficacy. But this is a mistake. While a picture or emblem is necessary in some cases, the scapular is the woolen cloth.

Scapulars originated with the monks of the early Church. The Carmelites, the Benedictines, the Franciscans and the Dominicans wore scapulars over their monastic habits. They were blessed and imposed at the reception of the candidate. In the language of the Ritual the Scapular was called "the yoke of Christ," and as the obligations of the religious life were never to be laid aside, so the scapular was never to be removed, but was to be worn at night as well as during the day.

In the pious times which we call the Middle Ages many devout lay persons joined the religious Orders at monastic services, united their prayers with those of the monks, and partook of the spiritual benefits of the devotions and good works of the Order. These often received the religious garb. Some of them wore the garb constantly, and it was looked upon as a great privilege to die and to be buried in the monastic habit.

In later times the religious garb was dispensed with, and the scapular, much reduced in size, was worn under the clothing. Thus it has come to pass that the associations of the laity known as "Third Orders,"—such as those connected with the Franciscans and Dominicans,—to-day wear as their badge a so-called large scapular.

The object of the Confraternity of the Holy Scapular is to implore the protection and intercession of the Blessed Mother of God in all the perils of this life, in the hour of death, and in the flames of Purgatory. This Confraternity was founded in 1250 by St. Simon Stock, of Cambridge, in England. Simon was superior-general of the Carmelite Order. He was a man of such great sanctity, wisdom, and prudence that he was afterwards canonized by the Church. It is said that the Mother of God appeared to him and gave him a scapular, with the promise that every one who wore it, and lived piously, should escape eternal death,

should experience her protection in seasons of danger, and should be speedily released from Purgatory. An aspirant will be admitted into the Confraternity by a priest who has the necessary faculties from the provincial of the Carmelites; his name will be entered in the register of the Confraternity, and the scapular will be hanged around his neck. This scapular consists of two small pieces of brown cloth, fastened together by a braid. Members of the Third Order of Mount Carmel are obliged to recite the Little Office of Our Lady (which may, if necessary, be commuted to a certain number of Patres and Aves), to fast on every Friday throughout the year and on other specified days. Our Blessed Lady acts towards her children as Rebecca did towards her favorite son Jacob. Rebecca arrayed Jacob in the garments of his brother Esau, in order that he might obtain the blessing of his father; so Mary clothes us with the scapular, the livery of her divine Son, to render us acceptable in the sight of our heavenly Father and to obtain for us His benediction.

The scapular may be given in any place, not necessarily in church; the sick may receive it on their beds. It must be worn as prescribed. If worn or carried otherwise, no indulgences are gained. It may be worn under all the clothing, or over some of it.

After having been invested, it is never necessary

to have a scapular blessed. When one is worn out or is lost, the wearer simply puts on another, without ceremony.

The scapular is intended to give its wearer a share in certain spiritual benefits and privileges. It must therefore be worn constantly. If the wearing of it has been neglected for a long time, no indulgences are gained during that time. As soon, however, as the scapular is resumed, the spiritual benefits begin again for the wearer.

All those who have been invested with the brown scapular become sharers in the fruits of all the good works of the great religious Order of the Carmelites,—their prayers, meditations, Masses, penances, charitable works, etc. More than this, by a decree of the Holy See they partake in a special manner in all the good works performed in the whole Church by clergy, religious, and laity and after death they share in all the prayers of the Carmelites and in their weekly Masses.

Many indulgences may be gained; a plenary one on the day of receiving the scapular, under the usual conditions; another at the hour of death.

There are many kinds of scapulars: the Mount Carmel, or brown scapular; the scapular of the Most Holy Trinity; the scapular of Our Lady of Ransom; the scapular of the Seven Dolors; the black scapular of the Passion; the scapular of St. Benedict; the scapular of the Immaculate Concep-

tion; the scapular of the Precious Blood; the red scapular of the Passion; the scapular of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; the scapular of St. Joseph; the scapular of the Sacred Heart; the scapular of St. Dominic. By a regulation made by Pope Pius X, in 1910, it is permitted to wear a medal instead of one or more of the small scapulars. The wearing of several scapulars is inconvenient and possibly unsanitary, and this medal can replace any or all of them. All persons who have been validly invested with a blessed woolen scapular may use the scapular medal instead.

Whenever the medal is lost, it must be replaced by a new one, and this new one must be blessed by a priest who has faculties to bless and invest with the corresponding scapular.

How must the medal be worn? There is no rule about this. It may be hung from the neck, carried in the pocket or purse, or worn in any desired manner. If worn or carried constantly, it gives a share in all the spiritual privileges that would come from the wearing of the scapular which it replaces.

St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, had been brought up with a great devotion to the Holy Virgin. When sending him to Paris to make his studies, his mother recommended him never to let a day pass without having recourse to his Divine Protectress. The young man, docile to the coun-

sels of his mother, always showed himself most zealous for the glory of Mary. He went several times a day to prostrate himself before one of her statues; and to mark his engagement in the service of the Queen of Angels, he placed on the finger of one of her statues a ring, on which he had caused to be engraved the whole of the Angelic Salutation. After the death of the Blessed Edmund, it was remarked that the same prayer was engraved on his episcopal ring to which that prayer communicated a virtue so efficacious that it produced a good many miraculous cures. If we do not engrave the words of the *Hail Mary* on a ring, let us engrave them on our hearts; that will be still better.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY IN THE USE OF CEREMONIES

CEREMONIES are acts of religion exteriorly manifested, by which the mind is excited to veneration of holy things and elevated to heavenly objects. By ceremonies piety is nourished, charity enkindled, faith increased, the worship of God adorned, and religion maintained. The simple are thus instructed, and the faithful are kept distinct from false Christians. Christ Himself hardly ever performed a miracle without using some ceremony, as when He made damp clay, and stretched His hand out to touch, and wrote upon the ground. The body should pay its homage to God as well as the soul. We are so constituted by nature that all the sentiments of our soul show themselves in our exterior.

The uncovering of the head is an outward sign or ceremony, used to give evidence of respect and esteem. If you wish to express to some one your good wishes, you grasp his hand; if you would assure another of the truth of some utterance, you lay your hand upon your heart. The same expressions are quite natural in the worship of God.

God does not need this outward evidence. He knows better than we the state of our souls. But *we* need it. If our sentiments are true and sincere, it is not in our power to conceal them. As the despairing wretch involuntary wrings his hands and tears his hair, so the man filled with reverence naturally falls upon his knees, and the devout man naturally folds his hands. We can offer God mental prayer very devoutly, but if we cast ourselves upon our knees and lift up our hands, we feel our humility and reverence for God increase, and our devotion becomes more fervent; we then endeavor to awaken in our heart what we express in our posture. Finally, we thereby give to others an evidence of our sentiments. If from our attitude they notice our devotion and reverence for God, they are stimulated to follow our example, and we in turn are edified by them.

Internal piety requires to be excited and nourished by ceremonies or certain sensible signs. In the ceremonial and discipline of the Church there is no part without the use of sensible signs. That which might seem the most trifling has its proper object, and serves in some way or other to promote habits of humility, order, patience, recollection, and religion, so as to build up the Catholic character.

A great writer calls the ceremonies of the Church "Sacraments of Devotion." He divides them into

three classes:—the first consisting of things, such as the aspersion of water, the reception of ashes, the blessing of palms and tapers; the second of actions, such as the sign of the Cross, the insufflations, the extension of hands, genuflections; the third of words, such as the invocation of the Blessed Trinity and the "*Deus in adiutorium*," for words themselves are sometimes Sacraments. From the exorcisms and insufflations used in Baptism it is easy to understand that children are born under the yoke of the demon and infected with original sin. The unlearned would have found it difficult to understand this from the Scriptures. In like manner, the ashes strewn on the heads of men at the beginning of Lent teach them in a most forcible manner the vanity of all earthly things; and in Holy Week the solemn ceremonies of the Church imprint on their minds a knowledge of the mysteries of man's Redemption. The solemnity of the ritual itself has been known to produce permanent conversions.

After King Clovis had been converted to the faith and initiated by the holy Bishop Remigius in the truths necessary to be known, he went to the church to receive the holy Sacrament of Baptism. The road between the royal palace and the church was superbly adorned and shaded by hangings suspended from above; the walls of the houses were

draped with costly silks; the church in which the king was to be baptized was decked out in all its splendor, and in it a showy baptistry was erected; the air was laden with delicious perfumes. The solemn procession was headed by the whole body of the clergy, one of whom bore the Book of the Holy Gospels, preceded by the cross and a great number of lighted torches, while all implored the help of God and His Saints in the usual prayers of the Church. The king followed, being led by the hand of the saintly bishop. The queen came next, and in her train an innumerable crowd. Now when the king saw the long line of sacred ministers, when he heard their hollowed chants, and witnessed the devout splendor and magnificence of the function, he was inwardly moved and filled with such joy and consolation that, turning round to the prelate, he asked him whether this was the Kingdom of God which had been promised to him should he embrace the Faith? "No, Sire," replied St. Remigius, "this is not the Kingdom of God I promised you, but the way that leads thereto." From this we may learn the powerful influence which the sacred ceremonies connected with God's worship can exert over our minds, since they availed to soften the heart of the fierce conqueror accustomed to live amid regal splendor, and make him think that he was in Heaven, when he was only on the way to the Heavenly Kingdom.

We must love for Jesus Christ's sake whatever we see in church. The cross, the golden image, is made for His honor; the censer which swings around the priest, the Gloria sung in choirs, the peaceful light of the perpetual lamp, the lighted tapers—all are for the love of Jesus.

Why is the Host elevated if it be not to honor Him, as it is no more bread, but His sacred Body? The believing Church bends the knee. It is in His honor alone that the children are early instructed to make the sign of the cross, that their tongues sing His praises, and that they strike their breasts thrice with their little hands. It is for the love of Jesus Christ that the child who serves sounds the bell, and to Him he offers up all his actions.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF HOLY WATER

HOLY Water is blessed throughout the year on every Sunday, or as often as necessary. It is not used in giving baptism, but only for the "Asperges," which occurs on Sunday before High Mass. In blessing this water the priest says: "O God, Who, for the benefit of mankind, hast made use of the element of water in the greatest Sacraments, mercifully hear our prayers and impart the virtue of Thy blessing to this element, prepared by many kinds of purification, that this Thy creature, made use of in Thy mysteries, may receive the effect of Thy divine grace for banishing devils and curing diseases; and that whosoever shall be sprinkled with this water in the houses or places of the faithful, may be free from all uncleanness and delivered from evil. Let no pestilential breath reside there, nor infectious air; let all the snares of the hidden enemy be baffled; may he be put to flight by the sprinkling of this water, through Our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then the priest mingles salt, previously blessed

by similar prayers, with the water, saying: "May this salt and water be mixed together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." After this he recites the following prayer: "We pray and beseech Thee, O Lord, with dread and humility, to regard with favor this creature of salt and water, to ennoble it with Thy bounty, and to sanctify it with the dew of Thy fatherly goodness, that wherever it shall be sprinkled, all annoyances of the unclean spirit may depart, and all fear of the venomous serpent may be dispelled, through the invocation of Thy holy name; and that the presence of the Holy Ghost may be everywhere with us, who seek Thy mercy, through Our Lord Jesus Christ."

These prayers teach us that there are five effects attained by Holy Water: to chase away the devil from those places which he has infested, and thus remove evils which he has caused; to keep the devil far from us, the places we dwell in, and the things we use; to serve for the cure of the sick; to bring us on every occasion the presence of the Holy Ghost, for the welfare of our souls and bodies; and to efface venial sin.

And all these effects are really produced by Holy Water. Were we to call them into question, we should defy ecclesiastical history from its first to its last page. These effects are enough to justify the Church, our Mother, who sprinkles Holy Water

on men, on creatures, on the dead, in order to excite within us sentiments of contrition, charity, and devotion; who every Sunday sprinkles with it the faithful, so that they may assist at Mass with more attention, innocence, and purity; and who always keeps it at the door of the house of God. Following the advice of the Church, the faithful are not content with taking Holy Water at the temple, but carry it to their homes, keep it carefully, and use it when going to rest, when rising, and at various other times during the day. They do this in order to banish the spirit of darkness and to secure for themselves the help of God in a thousand unforeseen dangers of soul and body.

The blessing of water comes from Apostolic times. The custom of blessing water every Sunday before Mass is of the highest antiquity; it is evidently connected with the custom of the early Christians of washing their hands and faces in blessed water, to purify themselves before entering the church.

The Church wishes to purify the faithful and to give them all the sanctity that they require to assist worthily at the great mysteries. The property of water is to wash. Salt preserves it from corruption. Water and salt mixed together are an emblem of purity and innocence. Here we have the matter of Holy Water.

The prayers said over the water and the salt are

exorcisms to drive the devil away. To exorcise water and salt means that the priest commands the devil, on the part of God, to leave these two creatures free, to avail himself of them no more for injuring men, so that they may henceforth be useful to their salvation. Such is the meaning of the exorcisms that are performed over inanimate creatures.

There are four distinct kinds of Holy Water. The first is baptismal water, which is ordinarily blessed on Holy Saturday, but which may also be blessed on the eve of Pentecost. This water receives a special and solemn blessing, and the holy oils consecrated on Holy Thursday are mingled with it. It is used only for the administration of the sacrament of Baptism. The second kind is the "Water of Consecration," so called because it was ordered by Pope Gregory IX. It is used by bishops in consecrating churches and in its blessing it has wine, ashes, and salt mingled with it. The third kind of water is the so-called Easter Water, which is distributed on Holy Saturday. The faithful take it to their homes. This water is also used by the clergy for the solemn blessing of houses on Holy Saturday. The fourth and most common kind is the Holy Water which is blessed by the priest for the sprinkling of the people before Mass and which is placed at the doors of the church. This also may be taken home and used for the

blessing of persons and things. Holy water should be used frequently. There is an indulgence of one hundred days every time it is taken. The sign of the cross must be made with Holy Water, the person must have contrition for his sins, and he must say the words: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The country surrounding the city of Antioch was frequently ravaged by swarms of grasshoppers, which brought famine and pestilence in their wake. There is a legend in the life of St. Aphraates, a solitary of that country, who turned away the pest from a certain field by the means of Holy Water. A poor man noticing the approaching plague went to St. Aphraates beseeching him to come to his assistance. "Father," said he, "we are lost. Here are the grasshoppers coming; they will eat up my wheat field, and it is all I have to feed my wife and children, and pay the Emperor's taxes. I pray you, man of God, have pity on me!"

"But, my good man, I can do nothing myself; it is only God who can work a miracle in your behalf. Nevertheless, if you have confidence, bring me a pitcher of water." The poor laborer went out and quickly returned with the water; St. Aphraates dipped his hand in it, said a prayer over it, and, having blessed it, gave it to the man, telling him to take the pitcher, and sprinkle

a little of the Holy Water all around his field. He did so, and when the grasshoppers arrived, not a single one crossed the limits of the poor man's field; such of them as went in that direction were thrown back as if by an invisible agency. The crop on that field was more abundant, convincing every one of the sanctity of Aphraates and of the virtue of Holy Water.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF THE HOUSE OF GOD AND HIS ALTAR

THOUGH God is everywhere, though the universe is a magnificent temple, yet there must be churches. At all times and among all peoples there have been places specially consecrated to the worship of the Deity. The tops of mountains and the depths of forests were chosen in preference; the former because they seemed to bring man nearer to Heaven, the latter because they were found more favorable for recollection.

A hill or some other eminence used to be selected as the site of a church because of old high places were considered sacred. In the Old Law God frequently manifested Himself to mortals on a mountain. Jesus often withdrew to a mountain to pray, and the Temple of Jerusalem, the type of the Christian Church, was situated upon a mountain. On an eminence one is more disposed for prayer; one is aloof from the noise of the busy world and feels nearer to God. Christ Himself said that His Church was to be built upon a rock, and He was crucified upon Mount Calvary.

Churches situated in the center of a town or village remind us that the Good Shepherd loves to dwell in the midst of His sheep in the Blessed Sacrament. The Church of St. Peter in Rome is the largest basilica in the world.

In regard to the exterior, the church is larger and higher than ordinary dwelling houses because it is the habitation of the Most High God. It is built in the form of a cross because the sacrifice of the cross is re-enacted within its walls and the doctrine of the Crucified is preached there. It has a spire pointing towards Heaven, our home, to admonish us to seek the things that are above. Bells are hung in the tower to summon us to divine worship or call us to prayer. The spire is surmounted by a cross, the emblem of salvation, the instrument whereby God is reconciled to man. The interior of the church is divided into three parts; the porch, where in former days the catechumens and penitents used to kneel, and which ought to remind us of the preparation necessary before entering the church; the nave, which is the part appropriated to the faithful, wherein, as in Noe's ark, they are saved from eternal perdition; and the choir, where the singers formerly sat, but which is now set apart for the clergy. The choir is separated from the body of the church by a rail or communion table. At the entrance of the church we see the holy water font, which reminds

us that we ought to approach God with pure hearts. In the interior of the church are one or more altars. Over the high altar is the tabernacle, wherein the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and before which the sanctuary lamp is kept continuously burning, to symbolize the Light of the World there present. There are also pictures and statues of Angels and Saints, who assist unseen at the sacred offices. The dim religious light that pervades the building, owing to the colored glass of the windows, reminds us that we understand the things of God only in a dark manner here below.

Those who assert that it is unnecessary to go to church because they can say their prayers anywhere, should consider that Our Lord is actually present upon our altars, that the atmosphere of the sacred edifice disposes us to recollection, and that petitions offered there have more power than those offered elsewhere.

By God's command Moses had to annoint the Tabernacle with oil, and Solomon's Temple was dedicated by that monarch himself. It appertains to the office of a bishop to consecrate churches, but he may give leave for Mass to be said in any building set apart for the purpose. The principal ceremonies for the consecration of a church are as follows: the bishop kneels before the principal entrance and recites the Litany of the Saints; then rising, he goes three times around the outside of

the church, sprinkling the walls with holy water; each time he passes the door he knocks upon it with his crozier, to signify that nothing can resist the force of the Cross, and then enters the church, where he falls on his knees and invokes the Holy Spirit. He draws the letters of the Greek and Latin alphabets upon the pavements of the church, which is strewn with ashes to signify that all the nations are called into the Church by Christ. Next he goes around the interior of the building three times, sprinkling the walls with holy water, and three times up the center and across it. This is in honor of the Holy Trinity and the crucifixion of Christ. Afterwards he anoints the walls in twelve places, where lighted tapers are affixed, in memory of the twelve Apostles, who spread abroad the light of the Gospel. He then proceeds to consecrate the altar.

The sanctuary is separated from the body of the church by a railing, which has three doors,—the one in the middle being larger than the other two and called the Holy Door. In the sanctuary is the altar.

The Apostles offered the Holy Sacrifice on a table in a dwelling house. To this day the table whereon St. Peter offered the Holy Sacrifice may be seen in the Church of St. John Lateran in Rome. A table was used because it was on a table that the

Holy Mass was instituted by Our Lord on Holy Thursday.

In the time of persecution the Holy Sacrifice was offered on the tombs of the martyrs in the Catacombs. It is because of this that the altar to this day has the form of a tomb, and that relics of the Saints are deposited in it. It is on account of the relics being there that the priest frequently kisses the altar.

In olden times a table or mound was formed of stone and decked out as an altar. Noe, on coming out of the ark, built an altar, and the other patriarchs did the same. Altars must be composed of stone, or else a stone, blessed by a bishop and containing relics, must be let into the top. On this stone the paten and chalice are placed, to signify that Christ is the foundation and cornerstone on which the Church rests. A threefold linen cloth must be spread upon the altar, both because Our Lord was wrapped in a linen cloth when He lay in the sepulchre, and also to absorb any drops of the Precious Blood that may fall from the chalice.

St. Margaret, the holy Queen of Scotland, always sought to inspire her children with the greatest respect for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. "Nowhere," she would say, "must we avoid more

carefully a lazy, slothful posture than in church during Mass." The young princes learned the practice of behaving properly at Mass from the example of their royal mother. One of the Edinburgh folk said one day to a neighbor: "If you want to know how the angels pray in Heaven, look at our Queen and her children in church."

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF THE CHANT AT HOLY MASS

THE singing of which the Church makes use as an accompaniment to the Mass, is what is known as the Gregorian Chant. This may be heard at High Mass, when the priest sings the preface or the *Pater Noster*, and when he begins the *Gloria* or *Credo*. This style of music is called Gregorian because it was brought to perfection and introduced into general use by Pope St. Gregory the Great. It is believed that it was by divine inspiration, or through direct revelation, that the Saint did so much in the interest of Church music. The Chant is marked by extreme gravity, majestic dignity. It is free from all rapid movements, all florid passages, all striving after effect. It is the language of another, higher world; it is truly the voice of prayer and of praise. In the Gregorian style special attention is paid to the text, the words of which are plainly audible; the beautiful, subdued melody holds a secondary place. Gregorian music undergoes no change; like Latin, the lan-

guage of the Church, it is always and everywhere the same. Many devout Christians prefer this style of singing to any other, because it is a stimulus to recollection and devotion.

Sacred music is most useful in exciting devotion. St. Augustine says: "How many tears I have shed when hymns and canticles were sung to Thee, O my God! What emotions were roused within me when the church reechoed with sweet melodies! Each note fell upon my ear like soothing balm, carrying conviction of Thy truth to my heart, and kindling within me the ardor of devotion."

Music is an efficacious prayer, for the feelings of the heart gain force when the voice expresses them by song. The Fathers of the Church cannot say enough in commendation of the use of vocal music in church. They say that it appeases the wrath of God, drives away the spirits of evil, attracts the Angels, and leads the Holy Spirit to visit the heart of the singers; that on the wings of song souls are aided to soar on high, and that the voice of song awakens in the mind a longing for heavenly things. Vocal music is an integral part of the solemn celebration of the Holy Sacrifice; the Church could more readily dispense with magnificent structures, rich coloring, costly vestments, or with precious vessels, than with singing, for song is the language in which utterance is given to her prayers. We read that at the Last Supper

Our Lord and His Apostles sang a hymn, after which they went out to Mount Olivet. The early Christians sang during the celebration of Holy Mass.

At the present day some parts of the Mass are appointed to be sung by the priest. The singing at Mass should be in harmony with the prayers recited by the priest and with the festival of the day. The singing should be done at intervals during Holy Mass and joined with the priest who officiates at the altar. The Holy See has expressly forbidden singing to go on during some parts of the liturgy, as at the Consecration, and when Benediction is given with the Blessed Sacrament.

The celebrated Italian musician, Alexandro Stradella, had the misfortune to give offence to an entire Roman family. The haughty nobles determined to have revenge. They hired a band of assassins to waylay the musician on his return from church and murder him. On the appointed evening they came to the church. Alexandro, little dreaming of any danger, entered the choir and began to play and sing a sweet and touching melody. He had just composed the piece and was now playing it for the first time. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, have mercy on me; look on me in my sadness; condemn me not in justice, but pardon me in mercy." These were the words he sang. As the touching melody rose and filled the whole

church with its melancholy strains, no one present could repress his tears. Even the hardened assassins were moved. Tears glistened in their eyes; they sheathed their poniards and pronounced a vow that they would never strike at the heart of him who could sing so sweetly.

In addition to the Gregorian Chant we have in our churches congregational singing, hymns in which the people join. Congregational singing during Mass should be allowed only in moderation so as to leave every worshipper free to enter into the spirit of the holy mysteries and not interfere with private devotion.

Instrumental music in churches enables us to lift up the heart to God with greater facility. Delight in the melody disposes the mind of the weaker brethren to deeper devotion, and is an aid in raising the thoughts from the natural to the supernatural sphere.

Daily in monasteries and in convent chapels the Divine Office is sung by those who have given their lives to God. All over the world, Sunday after Sunday, the praise of God is sent up before His throne in sacred song. In grand cathedrals, in parish churches, and in mission chapels the homage of the faithful is offered to the Lord in the sweet and simple melody of the sacred chant.

St. Rose of Lima and Blessed Mary Ann of

Jesus are called American saints because they were born in South America. God blessed each one with a beautiful voice. St. Rose, in her great love for singing canticles, even asked the unreasoning creatures to praise God. This she did particularly in the case of a little bird, which came every evening during Lent and perched itself on the branch of a tree near her cell. When Rose commenced to sing, the bird began also with a soft and mellow tone and thrilled and piped louder and more clearly its song of jubilee, until it ended. Then Rose began to sing again, and so they each took their turn for hours in singing the glory of Our Lord.

The young soul of Bl. Mary Ann of Jesus was full of music. All day long, at work or at play, she would sing, and her voice possessed such a singular sweetness that it not only gladdened the listener, but made him think of lofty and holy things. Several times it was noticed that the birds flew down to Mary's window and imitated her song.

St. Rose and Bl. Mary Ann of Jesus sang hymns and canticles to honor their Creator. All the saints have gloried in singing the praises of God.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

GOD requires that you behave reverently and devoutly in His house. Our churches are far more holy and venerable than the Temple of Jerusalem.

To-day, and on the three following Sundays, we shall study the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and explain the prayers and ceremonies of which it is composed.

The Holy Mass begins with prayers at the foot of the altar. The priest, bowing down at the foot of the altar signs himself with the sign of the cross, saying: "*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" The early Christians began all their works with the sign of the Cross. It reminds us of the unbloody renewal of the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross.

The priest continues with the antiphon: "*I will go unto the altar of God; to God who giveth joy to all my youth*"; that is to say, by this Holy Sacrifice the whole creation is endowed with a new life.

The forty-second Psalm is then recited by the priest and server. The priest beseeches God to enter into judgment with him before he crosses the sacred threshold. He conjures Him not to have regard to his faults, but to remember only that he belongs to the holy nation, and wishes to be wholly separated from deceit and iniquity. He implores the divine light to guide his steps to the mountain of salvation.

Then bowing low, and striking his breast, like the publican who dared not to lift up his eyes, the priest declares himself guilty in the sight of Heaven and earth, by reciting the *Confiteor*. This prayer consists of two parts; in the first we confess to God, to all the saints, and to the faithful present that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, while in the second we ask their intercession with God.

The server, who represents the people, uniting with the Saints of Heaven, answers: "*May the Lord God Almighty have mercy on you, and, after forgiving you your sins, bring you to life everlasting.*" Before raising his head, the priest gives expression to the only wish of his heart, "*Amen.*" Touched by the humility of the priest the people understand that they also have need of pardon and mercy, so they humbly confess their faults, strike their breasts, and ask the priest, whom they call "Father," to pray for them to the Almighty God.

The priest answers: "*May the Lord Almighty have mercy on you, and after forgiving you your sins, bring you to life everlasting.*" Then, joining his case with that of the people, he adds, "*May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution, and remission of all our sins.*" While saying this prayer, he makes the sign of the cross, to restore in himself and the people the image of Jesus crucified.

The prayer for mercy, consisting of short versicles, the priest says with the server standing at the foot of the altar, and in an inclined posture.

After recommending the faithful to pray always, the priest slowly advances towards the altar, redoubling his entreaties that he may enter undefiled into the Holy of Holies. For the faithful as well as for himself he makes this prayer: "*We beseech Thee, O Lord, take away from us our iniquities, that we may enter Thy sanctuary with a pure heart; through Christ Our Saviour, Amen.*" When the priest says, "*whose relics are here,*" he kisses the altar. For the sake of the merits of the Saints he asks God to grant us that purity of soul which is required for the worthy celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Then the priest moves to the epistle side and begins the *Introit*. *Introit* means entrance, and the *Introit* is said the moment the priest goes to the altar. The *Introit* adapts itself to the feasts

that occur, or to the season, and expresses either joy or sorrow, humble petition, hope or desire. Many Sundays take their title from the first words of the *Introit*.

Kyrie and *eleison* are Greek words, which mean "*Lord have Mercy!*" The use of this prayer, begun in the Greek Church, is of the highest antiquity in the Latin Church. It is repeated nine times: three times in honor of the Father, three times in honor of the Son, and three times in honor of the Holy Ghost. *Kyrie* is said for the Father and the Holy Ghost because they are of one nature; but the Son is invoked by the name of Christ, for although He is of the same nature with the Father and the Holy Ghost, He has another nature, namely, the human nature, having in time become man. The Greek and Latin Church constituted only one Church before the ninth century.

A canticle of praise and of love, the *Gloria*, is admirably placed after the *Kyrie*. The Church has just cried out for mercy to her Divine Spouse. Fully confident that she has been heard, she intones a hymn of gratitude. As the *Gloria* is a song of jubilee and expresses great joy, it is omitted on the Sundays of Advent and Lent, and in Requiem Masses. In the *Gloria*, peace brought to the world by Jesus Christ is announced. The priest kisses the altar, as if to draw this peace from the very bosom of the Saviour. He kisses

the consecrated stone, the figure of Jesus Christ, the corner-stone of the Church. He extends his hands and says: "*May the Lord be with you.*"

The priest turns to the epistle side and says: "*Let us pray.*" He holds his hands open and raised: it was with hands raised towards the Temple of Jerusalem that the Israelites prayed; it was with hands outstretched that our ancestors prayed to imitate Jesus Christ on the cross.

The Collect signifies a collection of prayers for the necessities of the people. It always contains a petition which refers to the particular celebration.

After the prayer, the celebrant reads the Epistle, for the instruction for the people. At High Mass it is sung by the subdeacon. The Epistle, meaning a letter, is a selection from the Old or New Testament.

The Epistle is read before the Gospel because it is to prepare the way for the understanding of the latter. The priest lays his hands on the book, partly to intimate that the Sacred Scriptures are the property of the Church, partly to express his full consent to the doctrines contained therein. At the end the server says: "*Thanks be to God.*" Thanks to Him for having made known His will to us.

The priest goes to the middle of the altar, raises his eyes to heaven, and, bowing low, asks God for

that purity of heart and lips by which he may worthily announce the holy Gospel. During this time the faithful should also ask of God that their hearts may become good soil in which the sacred seed may take root, grow, and bear fruit.

After this preparation, the priest goes to the right side of the altar and reads or sings the Gospel. It is read at the right side of the altar because Christ is more than the writers of the Old Testament and because, when the doctrine of the Gospel was rejected by the Jews, the Apostles passed over to the Gentiles.

Priest and people sign themselves with the sign of the cross on the forehead, to show that they are not ashamed of the Gospel; on the mouth, as a sign of their readiness to confess the Gospel; on the breast, to express their love for the Gospel. The priest signs the book with a cross, to indicate that the Gospel is the Book of Jesus Christ crucified.

The people rise and remain standing while the priest reads the Gospel. They thereby manifest attention and respect to the truths and doctrines of the Gospel.

The celebrant kisses the page on which the Gospel is written, to express his reverence for it. "*May our sins be blotted out by the words of the Gospel,*" is said at the conclusion.

St. Hedwig's devotion to the Holy Mass com-

municated itself to her children. When her eldest son, Duke Henry, surnamed "the Pious," advanced against a horde of Tatars, who were devastating Silesia, his first action on the morning of the battle was to have Mass celebrated, at which he and every man in his army received Holy Communion. After exhibiting the most signal valor, Henry was slain; and when St. Hedwig heard the news, she thanked God for having admitted him to His kingdom of glory.

At the hour of your death the Masses you have heard will be your greatest consolation. Every Mass will go with you to judgment seat of God and plead for pardon. At every Mass you can diminish the temporal punishment due to your sins. By hearing Mass you can afford the souls of your loved ones in Purgatory the greatest possible relief.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF THE MASS— THE OFFERTORY

THE Creed naturally follows the Gospel, for the fruit of the Gospel must be that we accept its lessons. The Creed recited in the Mass is the Nicene profession of faith, which is an enlargement of the Apostles' Creed and contains the doctrine of the Divinity of the Son of God and the Holy Ghost, which was denied by heretics. The Creed is not said every day, but only on those days which remind us particularly of the gift of faith, and on the feasts of the Saints who have labored successfully for the propagation of the faith. The priest says the Creed at the middle of the altar, before the crucifix, because faith comes from Christ, and because we must give an account of our faith to Christ. At the beginning the priest raises his hands, by which he signifies that faith comes from Heaven. At the words, "*and was incarnate*," the priest genuflects in order to adore the God-man. Whilst the priest says the Creed, you must make an act of faith, and promise God to cling to your faith till you die.

The Offertory in former times was sung whilst the bishop or priest received the offerings of the people. To-day an extract from the Psalms, or some other portion of Holy Scripture, is read. The offerings of the faithful at the Offertory consisted of bread and wine. After the Christians had become lukewarm, this offering fell into disuse. The clergy were obliged to provide the bread and wine, and the faithful offered money instead. From this dates the custom of giving stipends for Masses and of taking up a collection during Mass.

When the Offertory begins, the priest uncovers the chalice. He spreads out the corporal, that is to say, the linen cloth on which the body of Jesus Christ is to rest. The corporal must be of linen because the shroud that enclosed Our Lord was of linen. The Church appointed the use of the corporal for greater cleanliness, and to prevent the inconvenience that might arise if a drop of the Precious Blood should happen to fall on the altar.

The chalice uncovered, the priest takes the paten, on which is laid the round thin piece of bread which we call the host, that is to say the victim. Holding the paten with both hands up to the height of his chest, the sacred minister raises his eyes to Heaven, and then casts them down, thus indicating that he offers to God, who is in Heaven, a pure and holy victim, though he himself is an unworthy sinner.

The priest completes the offering by making the sign of the cross, as if to place the victim on the cross, where it is to be immolated. He then puts half of the paten under the corporal and covers the other half with the purificator, so as to keep it more carefully, until he requires it for the breaking of the Host. He purifies the chalice with a small linen cloth, called a purificator. He puts some wine into the chalice, and then some water, but very little, because the matter of the sacrifice, that which the Saviour used, is wine. This mixture of wine and water is as ancient as the institution of the Blessed Eucharist. Tradition teaches us that the Saviour put some water into the cup of wine which He consecrated, thus conforming with the Jewish rite which required that the paschal cup should contain wine mixed with water.

This mixture is full of mystery. The water represents the people. We should constitute only one body with Our Lord, and consequently we should be consecrated with Him. He became like us by taking on our humanity; but that the union may be perfect, He wishes us to become like Him by clothing ourselves with His divinity. The mixture of wine and water is an image of union God's with man, which took place at the Incarnation. Such are the ideas expressed by the prayer that the priest recites while blessing the water that represents the faithful people.

In Masses for the dead the priest does not bless the water by the sign of the cross. The water, which represents the people, is not blessed, because the mind is wholly fixed on the souls in Purgatory, who are no longer in a way to be blessed by the priest. There is only a small quantity of water put into the chalice, so that the majesty of the blood of Jesus Christ may exceed the frailty of the people represented by the water.

The chalice being thus prepared, the priest returns to the middle of the altar, and offers it as he offered the bread, with this difference, that he speaks no longer in the singular number, but in the name of the assembly, whom he raises up to Heaven in the water mixed with the wine.

The priest makes the sign of the cross with the chalice to show that he lays the oblation on the cross of Christ. Then he bows, with hands joined on the altar, and suppliantly says in the name of all those present: *"Receive us, O Lord, who present ourselves to Thee, with humble minds and contrite hearts, and grant that our sacrifice may this day be accomplished before Thee in a manner pleasing to Thee."* Then he raises his eyes and hands to Heaven, in order to call down the Holy Spirit. At the same time he makes the sign of the cross on the chalice and the host, to denote that it is by virtue of the cross that he expects from the Holy Spirit the sanctification of the gifts

to become the body and blood of the Saviour.

The priest moves to the epistle side and washes his hands. This is to teach both clergy and laity that before offering sacrifice they ought to purify their souls from the least stain of sin.

In the prayer that follows the priest and the people offer their oblation to the three Divine Persons, together, because the glorification of the Most Holy Trinity is the principal object of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The priest faces the people and calls upon them to pray, in these words: "*Brethren, pray, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty.*" The priest says secret prayers to recollect himself in God. These prayers are said in a low voice.

The word *preface* means prelude, introduction. It is in preparation for the Canon that the Church causes the preface to be said immediately before beginning the prayers. It is to imitate Our Lord, who returned thanks to His Father before raising Lazarus to life, and before changing bread into His body and wine into His blood. The *preface* is a glorious song of triumph. It is an invitation to lift up our hearts to God and to join with all the heavenly choirs in praising and blessing Him. It is of very ancient use in the Church, coming probably from the Apostles.

The Roman Church counts eleven prefaces, of

greater or less antiquity: namely; the common preface for those days which have no proper one; and the special prefaces for Christmas, the Epiphany, Lent, Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, the Apostles, the Cross, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and for the dead.

While saying the *Sanctus*, the priest lowers his voice, both because this change is a relief and because it attracts attention. Yet he pronounces the words so as to be understood, because the people formerly were always invited to join in the canticle. Hence it comes that in high Mass it is still repeated by the choir.

Whilst the priest says *Sanctus*, "holy," he inclines with profound reverence to the altar; at *Hosanna in excelsis*, he raises himself again, as if he would go to meet Our Lord and salute Him. At the *Sanctus* a signal is given with a little bell to prepare the people for the holy action which is now about to be performed.

St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal, had a very pious page. A slander affecting Elizabeth and this page made the king determine to slay him; and he told a lime-burner to cast into his kiln the first page who should arrive with a royal message. On the day fixed the page was sent; but the boy, who was in the habit of hearing Mass daily; stopped on his way to do so. The king, in sus-

pense, sent a second page, the very originator of the calumny, who, coming first to the kiln, was at once cast into the furnace and burnt. Shortly after, the first page arrived from the church, and took back to the king the lime-burner's reply that his orders had been fulfilled. Thus hearing Mass saved the page's life, proved the queen's innocence, and wrought the king's conversion.

One Mass heard by you during life will be of more benefit to you than many heard for you after death. Holy Mass preserves you from many dangers and misfortunes. You shorten your Purgatory by every Mass. You win for yourself a higher degree of glory in Heaven.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

LITURGY OF THE MASS—
THE CONSECRATION

THE Canon immediately follows the *Preface*. The word Canon means a rule. This name was given to the prayer of the Mass that begins with the words "*Te igitur*" and extends to the "*Pater Noster*," first because it contains all the prayers prescribed by the Church for offering the Holy Sacrifice; and secondly because those prayers are never to be changed.

The Canon is the most excellent and ancient of all Catholic prayers. What veneration is due to these prayers which our ancestors in the faith so often pronounced before us,—prayers which were their chief consolation, and which obtained for them the strength necessary to resist tyrants, to endure tortures, to shed their blood for religion!

When the priest has finished the *Sanctus*, he raises his eyes and hands to Heaven in imitation of the Saviour, who, before working miracles, addressed His Father above. But the priest soon

casts down his eyes, joins his hands, and bows as a suppliant. He then kisses the altar, which represents Jesus Christ, in order to show his love and respect for Him, and to ask that his prayer may have power over the heart of God.

During this prayer the priest makes the sign of the cross three times over the chalice and host, in order to show that it is through the merits of the cross of Christ that he asks God to bless the bread and wine and change them into the body and blood of the Saviour. The priest keeps his hands spread out to the height of his shoulders. Moses on the mountain and Jesus Christ on the cross prayed thus.

The priest has prayed for all the Church. He has asked peace and union among all her children. He has asked protection for the Pope, and for the bishop of the diocese, because he is appointed to guide a portion of the flock. Lastly he has asked grace for all those who profess the Catholic and orthodox faith.

In the second prayer he recommends to God all those present, and more particularly those for whom he is about to offer up the holy Sacrifice.

The priest begins to call on all the illustrious inhabitants of Heaven, on Jesus Christ; on Mary, our Mother and the Mother of Jesus Christ, our eldest Brother; the Apostles; and a few of our most glorious martyrs. During this prayer the priest

holds his hands raised and bows respectfully at the names of Jesus and Mary. In the first memento the names of the living, and in the second the names of the dead are mentioned; and before and after Consecration, the names of the principal Saints of the Church. Prayers are then offered for the living and the dead, both of whom are named. There can be nothing more touching or charitable than these prayers. Everything in our liturgy breathes the great virtue of Christianity, that virtue which rules the civilized world, and which constitutes the strength of nations, the happiness of families, and the charm of life,—Charity.

The sacred minister extends his hands over the chalice and the host as Aaron and his successors extended their hands over the heads of victims. What a holy awe should seize us when we behold this ceremony,—when we consider that here, under the hands of the priest, we are also placed as victims with Our Lord!

The sacred minister draws back his hands and joins them as a sign of humility, for he is going to beg the greatest of miracles. Heretofore there have been on the altar only bread and wine,—the elements of the sacrifice. There is now question of obtaining their transubstantiation into the body of the Man-God.

The priest, while reciting these prayers, makes

the sign of the cross several times, in order to show that it is in the all-powerful name of Jesus Christ that he asks the miracle.

At length we have reached the supreme moment when the Son of God, the Creator of the world, prepares to obey the voice of a mortal. The priest wipes the thumb and forefinger of each of his hands on the corporal so as to remove moisture or dust from them, and to have them in a proper state to touch the body of the Lord. With the fingers which he has purified, he takes the host and in a plain, simple tone of voice, like that used by the Saviour,—whose place he holds,—he pronounces the words of Consecration.

The priest falls on his knees, and the bell tells the faithful to adore. In some communities the bell in the tower was tolled and people were to be seen casting themselves on their knees in houses and fields, and saying the Lord's prayer. Meanwhile the priest elevates the adorable body of the Son of God, who has just become incarnate in his hands.

After laying the body of the Lord on the corporal, the priest consecrates the chalice of His blood, which he calls a "*mystery of faith*." He concludes by repeating the words of the Divine Master: "*As often as you do these things, do them in remembrance of Me.*"

The elevation of the Host is followed by that of the chalice, which the priest, after adoring, places upon the altar.

The Consecration and the Elevation over, the priest extends his arms and continues the great action. Obedient to the express command of the Saviour, who said to His Apostles and their successors: "*Do this in memory of Me,*" the priest says that, in memory of the most blessed passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and His glorious Ascension into Heaven, he offers to the majesty of God a pure, holy, spotless Host, the Bread of eternal Life, and the Chalice of eternal salvation.

The priest, while saying this prayer, makes the sign of the cross five times; thrice on the Host and chalice together, once on the Host alone, and once on the chalice alone. The Church wishes our minds to be penetrated with the great thought that the victim of the altar is the victim of Calvary.

Now the priest casts down his eyes, bows low, and, joining his hands like a poor slave, lays them on the altar. Why all this? It is because he is going to ask God that the victim which he has just immolated may be borne by the hands of that Angel who is sanctity itself to the sublime altar of Heaven.

The signs of the cross with which the priest accompanies his prayer indicate the Real Presence of the holy Victim on the altar. Our chief dis-

positions during this prayer ought to be a profound humility and an ardent desire of sanctity, so that nothing on our part may prevent our petitions from being favorably received.

The priest earnestly asks for himself and the faithful the happiness of Heaven. Conscious of his unworthiness, he strikes his breast and acknowledges himself a sinner, as did the publican in the Gospel. That the faithful may hear him and join with him in supplicating the divine mercy, he raises his voice a little. He then invokes the principal martyrs, into whose company he beseeches God to receive us, not in consideration of our merits, but through the merits of Jesus Christ Our Lord.

The celebrant of the Mass has just begged admission for the dead and the living through Jesus Christ. When reciting these prayers he makes the sign of the cross many times. He makes it three times at the words *sanctify, vivify, bless*, in order to show that it is through the merits of the *Cross* of Jesus Christ that we have the Eucharist, and that the bread and wine are sanctified, vivified and blessed.

When King Ethelred marched to meet the Danes who were invading England, his army was very small as to numbers, but fired with a martial spirit. On the morning of the battle, the pious and brave

king attended the holy Sacrifice of the Mass and received Holy Communion to prepare himself for the desperate conflict. During Mass a message was sent to him, announcing that the enemy was advancing and it was necessary to hurry to battle. But Ethelred continued to pray with the same fervor and recollection as before. His answer to the different messengers who importuned him to come, was that he would not leave the church until he had united himself to the Conqueror of conquerors, and had obtained His blessing. When he had communicated, and the Mass was concluded, he arose full of burning ardor, placed himself at the head of his army, and in a few hours gained a brilliant victory over the Danes.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF THE MASS— HOLY COMMUNION

THE preparation for Holy Communion begins with the *Pater Noster*, or Our Father. Jesus Christ having offered Himself for us, we may with confidence, invoke God as Our Father and present to Him all our petitions, for through Jesus Christ we have become His children. The words in the *Our Father*, "*Give us this day our daily bread*"—remind us particularly of the Bread of Angels which we receive in Holy Communion.

The priest recites the *Our Father* with a loud voice, so that all present may unite themselves in prayer with him and remember the great happiness of being children of God.

In the last petition of the *Our Father*—"Deliver us from evil," the priest beseeches God to deliver us from all evil, to give us peace, and to protect us from sin and every other calamity.

During this prayer the celebrant holds the paten in his hand, makes the sign of the cross with it, and then kisses it. In the Cross of Christ there is heavenly power. The kissing of the paten is a

symbol of peace, and it is also a sign of our love for Christ crucified.

The breaking of the bread is done in remembrance of Jesus Christ, who, at the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament, also broke the bread; for this reason the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in Apostolic times was called the *breaking of the bread*. In the early days the host was much larger than now. After being consecrated, it was broken into three parts. The priest put one part into the chalice, another served for communion, and the remaining part for the faithful who were present.

The sacred minister puts the smaller part of the Sacred Host into the chalice, saying: "*May this mingling and consecration of the body of Jesus Christ be to us that receive it, effectual to eternal life, Amen.*" This mingling is meant to express that the Most Holy Sacrament, though it is on the altar under both appearances, is only one.

At the *Agnus Dei* the priest says three times: "*Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us!*" He strikes his breast in token of repentance and as an avowal of his unworthiness to receive the Son of God.

After the words, "*Give us peace,*" the celebrant says a prayer in which he implores Christ to preserve His Church in peace and unity. This is fol-

lowed by two prayers for the worthy reception of Holy Communion.

When these prayers are finished, he takes the Sacred Host into his hands, saying: "*I will take the Bread of Heaven, and I will call upon the name of the Lord.*" But when about to communicate, he remembers his unworthiness, and, striking his breast, says three times: "*Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but say only the word, and my soul shall be healed.*" Now follows the Communion itself.

The priest receives Holy Communion in the following manner: He lays the two particles of the broken Host each other and makes the sign of the cross with them, saying: "*May the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting, Amen.*" This prayer indicates that the body of Christ is given as a pledge of heavenly glory. Then he consumes the Sacred Host, praying for a few moments in silent devotion.

After this he uncovers the Chalice, makes a genuflection to the most Holy Blood, and recites a prayer. He then drinks the Precious Blood, saying: "*The Blood of Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting, Amen.*" Again he pauses a little.

Now the acolyte pours into the chalice wine, which the priest consumes. After the first ablution the server pours wine and water over the fin-

gers of the priest. This double ablution of the chalice with wine and water is made out of reverence for the Blood of Jesus Christ.

After Communion follows the *Post-Communio*, which is read on the epistle side. The priest goes to the middle of the altar, kisses it, and turns to the people with the salutation: "*The Lord be with you.*" The prayers include a petition in which we ask God various graces.

After the *Post-Communio* the priest announces the end of the Mass: "*Ite Missa est,—Go you are dismissed.*" At present the "*Ite Missa est*" is said whenever the *Gloria* is recited; if it is omitted, "*Benedicamus Domino*" is used instead.

The *Placeat* is a prayer which the priest says for himself and the people. This prayer being ended, the celebrant kisses the altar, raises his hands and eyes to Heaven, and then, turning towards the people and extending his right hand, blesses them by making the sign of the cross. In Masses for the dead the blessing is omitted; it cannot serve them for it is only for the living.

After this comes the *Gospel of Saint John*. It is read every day, unless there is a double office on account of some festival.

After we have heard Mass, very serious thoughts ought to fill our mind. Let us live as we should have lived on the day of the crucifixion of the Man-God if we had been present at His immola-

tion on Calvary. When leaving the church we descend the same mountain, we have assisted at the same sacrifice.

Blessed Thomas More, though Chancellor of England and occupied with many things, heard Mass every day. Once a message was brought to him from the King, requiring his immediate attendance on a matter of importance. "A little patience," replied the Chancellor, "I have not yet completed my homage to a higher Sovereign, and I must await the end of the divine audience."

At Mass you kneel amidst a multitude of Angels, who are present at the adorable Sacrifice with reverential awe.

You are blessed in your temporal goods and affairs. "If you ask the Father anything in My Name He will give it to you." (John XVI, 23.) Why not hear Mass every day?

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

*LITURGY OF THE SERVICES
OF THE DEAD*

CHRISTIAN burial is a solemn service accompanied by special ceremonies, in which the remains of the departed Catholic are carried in procession to the place of interment. As usual in every procession, the cross is carried first to denote that our prayers are offered in the name of the crucified Redeemer. The bells are tolled, psalms and funeral hymns are sung.

The special ceremonies customary at Christian burials are all significant of our prayer that God may have mercy on the deceased. The lighted tapers express the desire that the departed be admitted into the realm of perpetual light; the holy water sprinkled on the coffin expresses the desire that the soul may be cleansed from sin; the incense that is burned implies the wish that our prayers for the departed may ascend to the throne of the Most High, even as the clouds of smoke roll upward.

A Requiem Mass is generally celebrated at funerals, and sometimes a sermon is delivered, to invite the mourners to pray for the departed. If the body is not present, a catafalque occupies the place of the coffin.

The wreaths placed on the coffin are supposed to represent the victor's crown gained by the departed. The present custom of loading the coffin and covering the grave with costly floral decorations is greatly deprecated; it is a waste of money that had far better be given to the poor, or spent on Masses for the repose of the dead. The ceremonies at the obsequies of a child under seven years of age express joy and gladness; white vestments are worn by the priest.

Christian funerals are conducted with so much solemnity because it is pleasing to God that we should show reverence to the mortal remains of those who have departed this life in His grace.

It is becoming to treat the human body with respect after death. It is the medium or instrument of so many beautiful virtues and of so many works of piety performed by the Christian during his life, and should for that reason alone receive our respect and reverence. All the Sacraments are received by the means of the body. The body is washed in Baptism in order to cleanse the soul. The body is anointed that it may become a temple of the Holy Ghost. The body is fed with the Sa-

cred Flesh and nourished with the Precious Blood of Christ to strengthen and fortify the soul.

The body is an object of veneration for us, because we hope,—nay faith gives us the assurance,—that on the last day it will rise again from the grave, will be clothed with splendor and glory, and will share with the soul the eternal joys it has merited. Hence the Christian manner of burial was always distinguished from that of the pagans. While the Christians dressed the bodies plainly and neatly, the pagans clothed them in splendid and costly robes. This vain display was often censured by the Fathers of the Church. The most beautiful ornament of a Christian body is the symbol which indicates the faith of the departed in the Redeemer and his hope of resurrection and eternal life. Hence we do not, like the pagans, burn the bodies of our dead, but place them in a wooden coffin, the cross placed in the hands of the departed brother or sister; the cross that is borne before the funeral cortège, the cross, finally, that is planted on the grave after burial, signifies that the departed has died as a good Christian and looks forward to a glorious resurrection of the body and eternal happiness through the merits of Christ crucified.

It is the wish of the Church that, whenever possible, her children should be buried with a Mass. The priest enters the sanctuary garbed in sombre

black, the color of death, and all ornaments are removed from the altar. The veil before the tabernacle door is purple, the color of penance. Around the coffin are black candle-sticks, usually six in number.

Masses for the dead are much shorter than those said on other occasions. All parts expressive of joy are omitted. In these Masses there is no mention of any festival or Saint's day,—nothing but the expression of the Church's sorrow and hope, and the presenting of fervent petitions for the eternal welfare of the departed.

Besides the Mass on the day of burial, the Church has authorized Masses for the third and seventh day after death, and for the thirtieth day,—usually called "Month's Mind." There is also an anniversary Mass, differing from the others chiefly in the Epistle and Gospel read in it. On other occasions the Mass said for the dead is called "Daily Mass of Requiem." According to a late Roman decree three Masses of Requiem may be said by each priest on All Souls' Day.

When Mass is finished, the celebrant lays aside the chasuble and maniple, puts on a black cope, and turns to the place where the body lies. This part of the service is known as the "Absolution."

While the *Pater Noster* is being recited, the priest sprinkles the coffin with holy water, typifying the preservation of body and soul from the

dominion of Satan; he then incenses it on all sides, to express the honor that is due to the former temple of the Holy Ghost and tabernacle of Jesus Christ.

When the priest accompanies the body to the cemetery, as is done in some places, a beautiful prayer is read while the procession moves on: *"May the angels lead thee into Paradise; at thy coming may the martyrs receive thee and bring thee to Jerusalem, the holy city. May the choirs of angels receive thee, and with Lazarus, once a beggar, mayest thou have eternal rest."*

After a last sprinkling of the holy water, the grave is closed and the cross which surmounts it tells the passer-by that here lies the body of a Christian who lived full of hope and who awaits with confidence the day of the general resurrection.

One day while St. Malachi was burying the dead, he was laughed at by his sister, but her words had no other effect than to give him pain. When she died, he said many Masses for her. Some time afterward, in a vision, he saw his sister, dressed in mourning, standing in a churchyard and complaining that she had not tasted food for thirty days. Remembering that it was just thirty days since he had last offered the Adorable Sacrifice for her, he recommenced doing so, and after some time was rewarded by other visions, in the last of which he

saw her in church, clothed in white, near the altar, and surrounded by bright spirits.

Our Lord said to St. Gertrude: "God accepts every soul you set free, as if you had redeemed Him from captivity, and will reward you in fitting time for the benefits you have conferred."

"Prayer for the dead is more acceptable to God than for the living; for the departed soul is in greater need, being no longer able to help itself."
(St. Thomas Aquinas.)

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

*LITURGY OF THE FEAST OF THE
GUARDIAN ANGELS*

CERTAIN Angels are called Guardian Angels because they watch over us. Jacob saw a ladder reaching up to Heaven and Angels ascending and descending. This was to signify that they come down on earth to protect us, and ascend to Heaven to sing the praises of God.

The Guardian Angels watch over us as a shepherd watches over his flock. They count it as happiness that they are appointed to watch over the servants of God and to promote the welfare of souls; and no wonder, when we remember that the King and Lord of all things came," not to be ministered unto, but to minister." The service they render us causes them no trouble or anxiety, but rather joy and happiness, for their one desire is that the Will of God should be done, and they rejoice in contributing to this.

It is a general opinion of theologians that every man has a special Guardian Angel, who watches over him all through life. The dignity of the

Angels depends on the dignity of the persons to whom they are assigned. Ordinary Christians have one of the lower orders of angels: priests, bishops, kings, etc., have nobler spirits to guard them. Each city, country, parish, or religious house has its own Guardian Angel.

Our Guardian Angels help us by putting good thoughts into our minds and by moving our will to do what is good. The Angels who appeared to the shepherds at Bethlehem, and those who were seen at the tomb of Christ and after His Ascension, made themselves visible and spoke to men. But generally the Angels influence men without being seen or heard by them. They move us to some step that is conducive to the welfare of our souls and bodies, and often save us from impending danger by a secret impulse, without which we should incur death or misfortune.

They offer our prayers and our good works to God. Raphael offered the prayers of Tobias. This does not argue that God Himself does not hear our prayers, but only that the Angels mingle their prayers with ours and so make them more acceptable to God. *"In all the benefits we receive from God,"* says St. Thomas, *"our Guardian Angel takes part, because he helps in obtaining them for us."*

The Angels protect us in danger. St. Peter was delivered from prison by an Angel. Daniel was

kept safe in the den of lions and the three young men in the fiery furnace. We hear stories of children being run over, or falling from a height, and escaping unhurt. We can scarcely doubt that their preservation is owing to their Guardian Angels. But the chief office of the Angel is to preserve us from the snares of the devil. Angels have power over the evil spirits, who fly at their approach. We must, therefore, commit ourselves to the care of our Guardian Angels especially in time of danger, before undertaking a journey or any new enterprise; and we should wish our friends, when they start on a journey, the good wish of Tobias for his son when the latter was leaving home: "*May the angel of God accompany you.*"

The Angels often reveal to men the Will of God. The message of the Angel to Abraham, to Zacharias, and to our Blessed Lady are examples. Their appearance at first causes fear, but this soon changes to consolation and joy. It is just the opposite with the appearance of the evil Angels.

If we desire the protection of the holy Angels, we must try to imitate them by a holy life; we must honor them and often invoke their aid. Innocence attracts the Angels, and sin drives them away, as smoke drives away bees. We cannot expect our Guardian Angels to take care of us when we are doing what we know is displeasing to God.

In the Old Testament we find examples of the good offices of the Guardian Angels. Agar lost her way in the wilderness of Bersabe, and her child, Ismael, was perishing from hunger. When she lifted up her voice and wept, an Angel appeared and showed her a well of water, and both were saved. The Prophet Elias, exhausted from his long journey, sat down and asked God to let him die. An Angel appeared to him and brought him food and water. He ate and drank, and walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the Mountain of God, Horeb.

In the New Testament we find St. Peter guarded by soldiers on the day before he was to be executed. An Angel of the Lord came to him and awakened him from sleep, and as he followed the heavenly messenger, the chains fell from his hands, the iron gate opened, the Angel conducted him through the midst of the guards to safety. Paul in his voyage to Rome was in a ship which was overtaken by a violent storm, and all hopes of safety were lost. But he exhorted his fellow passengers to be of good cheer, assuring them that an Angel stood by him that night and told him that there would be no loss of life. And it came to pass that all were saved.

Our daily prayer should be: *“Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom His love commits me here; ever this day be at my side, to light and guard,*

to rule and guide. Amen." We have good cause never to omit this prayer; the Angel whom God Himself gave us for our protection, is appointed to obtain for us the precious gifts of our heavenly Father. This prayer will serve to remind us not to prove ourselves unworthy of our spiritual protector. Often we fear the eyes of men more than the eye of God, and we dare to commit in the presence of God sins which we would not commit in the sight of our fellow-men.

Let the thought of the presence of our Holy Guardian Angel deter us from sin. The thought of our Guardian Angel should always remind us of the Guardian Angels of others, and deter us from leading our companion into sin. Their Angels will be our accusers. The memory of the Guardian Angels and their office will encourage us to imitate them; for we, too, must be visible guardian angels for all those who belong to us.

St. Francis Regis had a deep devotion to the Holy Angels. He never passed a church without saluting the Guardian Angel of that church; and when he saw some one coming to confession, he always besought the Guardian Angel of that person to obtain for him the grace of true repentance. One day, passing down a street, he was suddenly stopped by some one. He looked round to see who it might be, but there was no one near him. He

tried again to move forward, but found it impossible. At that moment a window above his head was opened, and he heard a voice of one calling for a priest to attend a dying man. He at once ascended to the room, and, having heard the sick man's confession, anointed him. The poor man died with sentiments of great piety. St. Francis attributed this to the intercession of the Guardian Angel of the dying man.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF THE BLESSINGS OF THE CHURCH

IN the language of the Church, to bless a thing means to draw it from its natural state, to separate it from common and ordinary purposes, to change it from profane to holy uses, to devote it to God and to the ceremonies of religion.

God, after creating the universe, blessed it. Hence, all creatures are good, for they were applied to the glory of God, or sanctified by a general blessing, or approbation. *"God saw all things that He had made, and they were very good."* But sin entered the world and spoiled and vitiated all creatures. Hence the indispensable necessity of purifying them by the word of God and by prayer, so as to put to flight the devil and to conteract his influence.

In the Old Testament Moses, by a blessing that Heaven revealed to him, sweetened the waters of Mara. Eliseus purified the springs of Jericho by casting salt into them, while he pronounced these words: *"Thus," saith the Lord "I have made these waters wholesome, and they shall no more*

give death." Tobias blessed the nuptial chamber and drove out the devils. Before victims were sacrificed, hands were imposed on them; and oil, wheat, etc., were prayed over in order to be sanctified and made worthy of God.

Our Lord confirmed by His example what was done under the Old Law. He blessed five loaves and two fishes, with which He fed an immense multitude; He imposed hands on the sick in order to heal them; He blessed little children; He blessed and offered to His Father the bread and wine He was going to change into His body and blood, at the Last Supper.

The Lord gave the Apostles power to cast out unclean spirits and to heal all manner of diseases. The Church makes use of this power; by means of her ministers she blesses or consecrates certain objects, praying that God would render these objects efficacious against evil spirits and in healing disease. The priest implores the blessing of God the Father for the averting of evils, both corporal and spiritual. At the same time he makes use of visible signs, such as the sign of the cross, holy water, the sacred oils, etc. A light is kindled to signify the Saviour, who is the Light of the world. Incense is used to indicate that the sacramentals must be employed with pious dispositions. In blessings there is a form and sign of words, like in the Sacraments, which possess a supernatural

power and represent invisible grace. Blessings and sacramentals are means of grace of the second class.

The blessing consists in this, that the minister of the Church invokes the divine benediction upon certain persons and things. The divine blessing is quite distinct from divine grace. The latter has the effect of beautifying the soul, the former averts earthly ills and promotes temporal welfare. Thus objects are blessed for the sake of those who use them or on whose behalf they are used.

The following are the benedictions which are ordinarily conferred on persons: *the blessing at the conclusion of the Mass, the blessing given to communicants; the nuptial benediction; the benediction given after childbirth; the last blessing, and the blessing of the remains of the dead.*

The grace of our Redeemer opened the fountain of all heavenly blessings. The Church stands guard at this fountain of salvation; she blesses not only the fruits of the earth, but also the fields and the meadows, the gardens and the vineyards, that rain and sunshine may impart fertility to them. If wet weather or draught prevails, if a heavy storm threatens, in sickness or epidemics, she has recourse to prayers and blessings in order to obtain the help and protection of God.

The exterior sign of a blessing is the sign of the cross. St. Theodore, by his simple blessing, ex-

pelled the devil from a maid-servant who was possessed. St. Columba, by his blessing, delivered a poor man from a great evil which he had for a long time endured from the devil.

According to its nature the blessing is a prayer which, in order to be heard, must be made with confidence. We must have the same faith and confidence when receiving a blessing as when praying; we must carry in our hearts the conviction that God will impart to us everything that is necessary and expedient for us in time and for eternity.

We must receive the blessings with a pure, or at least a penitent, heart. To him who lives in sin without the desire of conversion every blessing is unprofitable. The Pope, a bishop or priest, or even a Saint may bless him, but God does not. God dearly loves the just man and gives efficacy to the blessing which is conferred on him. But even sinners partake of blessings. If they are really penitent and firmly resolve to amend their lives, God will show them mercy, and the blessing they receive will be salutary to them and will obtain for them the grace of conversion.

It is related of Blessed Henry Suso, a holy Dominican friar, that when the hour of meals came round, he was wont to kneel in spirit at the feet of Jesus and beg of Him to come and be his guest. Then, having taken his seat in the presence

of Our Lord, holding in his hands the plate containing the portion of food served out to him, would beg of Jesus to bless it and vouchsafe to eat with him. And so likewise, before he took the cup to drink, he asked a blessing from Our Lord and begged Him to drink before him. Although particularly fond of fruit, he abstained from it entirely for the space of two years, in order to acquire a perfect victory over his appetite.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF OUR DAILY PRAYERS

WHEN we are engaged in conversation with any one, we forget everything else. This is what we should do when we talk to God, that is, when we pray. During prayer we must direct all the powers of the soul to God,—the understanding by thinking of Him; the memory by forgetting the things of earth; the affections by taking delight in Him. Merely to think of God is no prayer; the devils think of God, but they do not pray. It is recorded of some Saints that the elevation of their souls in prayer was made manifest by external signs; they were raised from the ground and surrounded by supernatural radiance.

In praying it is customary to employ external signs of devotion, such as kneeling down, folding the hands, striking the breast, etc. By kneeling down we acknowledge our littleness in God's sight; by folding our hands we signify that we are helplessly bound by the chains of sin; by striking the breast, that we are deserving of stripes. Sometimes we prostrate ourselves upon the ground to testify our sense of nothingness before God. This

Judith did before she went into the enemy's camp, Our Lord did the same on Mount Olivet. So does the priest at the foot of the altar on Good Friday. When prayer is very fervent and importunate, the hands are lifted up and stretched out; thus Moses prayed during the battle between the Israelites and the Amalekites, and Solomon at the dedication of the Temple. The priest often does the same during the celebration of Holy Mass. The Jews of old turned their faces toward the Temple whilst they prayed; we may do likewise. David worshipped towards the Holy Temple, and so did Daniel. God needs not these outward signs, for He reads the hearts of man; but we thereby excite ourselves to greater devotion and humility. These postures are not a necessary adjunct to prayer; they may be dispensed with on account of weariness, sickness, or in the presence of others. One may even pray while walking abroad, as pilgrims do, or if one happens to hear the "Angelus" ring while one is on the streets.

We may raise our hearts in prayer to God without making a show of it; this is mental prayer. Vocal prayer is both useful and necessary. Man consists of a soul and a body, and he must yield homage to God with both. It is, moreover, natural to express the thoughts of the heart in words. In the absence of vocal prayer the Christian religion would lack its main-stay. Vocal prayer quickens

the attention of the mind and inflames the devotion of the suppliant himself as well as of others. Vocal or common prayer is more efficacious with God.

To pray with the lips only, and not with the spirit, is worthless. Our Lord complains of the Pharisees: "*This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.*" St. Augustine says: "*Many call upon God with the voice of the body, but not with the voice of the soul.*" All attitudes and gestures which are merely formal have no value. God is a spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth.

We can also pray with the voice of song. Hymns and spiritual canticles are excellent forms of prayer which the Apostle admonishes the Colossians to practice. This form of prayer is a powerful factor in raising the heart to God. St. Ambrose and Pope St. Gregory the Great did much to promote the custom of singing in churches.

It is well to recite the usual prayers, such as the Our Father and Hail Mary, but not to stick slavishly to one form. We should speak to God from time to time in our own words. He loves to hear us address Him with filial abandon. The three children in the furnace of Babylon cried to Him in their own language. The plainest language is the language of the heart, for it is not the words which God regards, but the desires of the

heart. Nor need we make long prayers. Our petitions are not valued on account of their length, but of their fervor. How richly was the brief supplication of the good thief rewarded!

We may pray either alone or in union with others. Our Lord exhorts us to pray to Our Father in secret, but also to offer our petitions in common with others.

By means of prayer we can obtain all things from God; He will grant our petitions in His own good time. St. Augustine terms prayer "*the key that unlocks the treasury of divine riches.*" As a man can get almost anything from his fellow-men for gold, so we can obtain almost anything from God by means of prayer. The Apostles prayed when the storm arose on the lake, and it was allayed. God does not always grant our petitions at once. St. Monica prayed for her son's conversion for eighteen years. God keeps us waiting both to try us and to make us value His gifts the more.

Our prayers obtain a speedier answer if they are accompanied by fasting, almsdeeds, or a promise; or if we invoke the intercession of the Saints in our behalf. A petition is more readily granted if it is presented by several persons at the same time; also if the suppliant is of the number of the just. *Fasting and almsdeeds are said to be the wings of prayer.*

In the morning we ought to pray to give thanks to God for having preserved us during the night, and to beseech Him to protect us from misfortune and sin during the day. The morning prayer should be said before we take our breakfast. The birds set us an example in this respect; they warble their morning song before they attempt to satisfy their hunger.

At night we ought to give thanks to God for the benefits we have received during the day; we ought to beseech Him to pardon the sins we have committed in its course, and to protect us during the night.

Before and after meals we ought to give thanks to God for our food, and we ought to implore His grace to avoid such sins as are often committed at table.

We ought to pray when the "Angelus" bell rings, calling upon us three times a day to recite the Angelic Salutation; also when we hear the bell for the Consecration or for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

When St. Peter of Alcantara was a child, he was distinguished for his love of prayer and spirit of recollection. He rose very early that he might have time to make his meditation, which he often prolonged for hours. He then repaired to church, where he heard Mass with great devotion, and

often received Holy Communion. The rest of the day was spent at school, but even there, and as he went along the streets, he never forgot God, but continually raised his heart to Him by some prayer for help or some little act of love. At dinner he always left a portion on his plate for the love of God, and would never drink anything but water, though in those countries it was usual, even for children, to mix a little wine with the water.

One day it happened that, when the dinner hour came, Peter was missing. They sought him high and low, in every room of the house and every corner of the garden, but he could not be found. At length they bethought themselves of one room which they had not yet searched, namely, the chapel. There they found the holy child upon his knees, his hands clasped, and his eyes looking up to Heaven. He had forgotten all about his dinner.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF PILGRIMAGES

PILGRIMAGES are journeys made to sacred places, where God oftentimes vouchsafes to give miraculous assistance to the suppliant. The Jews were accustomed to make pilgrimages; on the three principal solemnities of the year: the Paschal Feast, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles, all the men had to go up to the Temple. Thus we read that Our Lord, when twelve years old, went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

The places of pilgrimages are either the holy places in Palestine, spots sacred to the Apostles, or shrines of the Blessed Mother of God. The principal places of pilgrimage in the Holy Land are: the scene of the Crucifixion and the Holy Sepulchre on Mt. Calvary at Jerusalem; the place where Christ was born in Bethlehem, and the place of the Annunciation at Nazareth. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is situated on Mount Calvary; it consists of three separate churches, called, respectively, the Church of the Crucifixion, the

Church of the Ascension, and that of the Invention of the True Cross; all are under one roof. The early Christians journeyed thither in great numbers. In order to deter them from doing this, the Emperor Adrian, about one hundred years after Our Lord's death erected a heathen temple in the holy places. About the year 325, the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, discovered the Cross of Christ. This gave a fresh start to the pilgrimages. The Emperor Charlemagne erected a hospice close to the Holy Sepulchre for the accommodation of pilgrims. In the ninth century the Saracens conquered the Holy Land; the Crusades undertaken to recover it from them, were nothing less than heroic pilgrimages. In the fifteenth century, pilgrimages to the Holy Land again became frequent, but in Luther's time the number of those whose piety prompted them to undertake this long and toilsome journey had greatly diminished.

The principal places of pilgrimage in honor of the holy Apostles are the tombs of the princes of the Apostles in Rome, and the tomb of St. James at Compostella. The remains of St. Peter rest in the church of St. Peter in Rome, the largest sacred edifice in Christendom. It took a hundred and ten years to build this church, and it was finished in the year 1626. The remains of St. Paul are

laid in the basilica dedicated to him outside the walls of the city of Rome.

Some of the principal places of pilgrimage sacred to the Mother of God are: Lourdes in France; Loreto in Italy, Maria-Zell in Hungary, Einsiedeln in Switzerland, Altötting in Bavaria, Kevelaer in the Rhineland, and Our Lady of Healing, at Waterford, Ireland. Lourdes is situated in the south of France on the slope of the Pyrenees. It was there that, in 1858, the Mother of God appeared in a grotto to a little peasant girl named Bernadette, to whom she intimated her desire that a church should be built on the spot and that pilgrims should go thither in procession. From that time a spring has flown out of the grotto, the water of which has been the means of healing thousands of sick. The number of sick persons who visit the shrine can be counted only by the millions.

Loreto in Ancona has, since 1295, possessed the Holy House of Nazareth in which our Blessed Lady is supposed to have lived. A statue of Our Lady which stands on the altar, an image three feet high, carved in cedar wood, is said to be the work of St. Luke. A spacious church has been erected over the Holy House; copies of the latter have been made, and are seen in several places. At Loreto Pope Pius IX cured of apoplexy was in his youth. The most eminent Saints are known to

have made pilgrimages thither; and the number of pilgrims who visit it yearly is computed at five hundred thousand.

The place of pilgrimage known as Maria-Zell owes its origin to the Benedictine monks. About the commencement of the thirteenth century attention was attracted to the favors granted there. In 1363, King Louis I of Hungary gained a victory over the Turks, though his army was greatly inferior to theirs in number. In thanksgiving for this victory, which he attributed to the intercession of Our Lady, the King built a large church at Maria-Zell.

Einsiedeln was originally the humble dwelling of the hermit St. Meinrad, a Benedictine priest. In 861 he was slain by robbers in the forest. Later on a church was built on the site of his hermitage, in which an ancient and venerated image of Our Lady was preserved. While the bishop who came to consecrate the church was watching in the sacred edifice during the night preceding the appointed day, he beheld the Lord Himself performing the ceremony, attended by Saints and Angels, amid the chanting of celestial choirs. In consequence of this vision, both he and his successors in the see, with papal sanction, desisted from any attempt to consecrate the church. This circumstance, together with the canonization of St. Mainrad, whose remains were interred at Einsiedeln, and the nu-

merous miracles which were wrought there, brought the spot into great repute as a place of pilgrimage.

God is disposed to hear our petitions more quickly in places of pilgrimage; they are as it were, the audience chamber of the King of kings, where graces are lavishly bestowed. Many sick persons make a vow to undertake a pilgrimage if they are restored to health. The number of *ex votos* on the walls of sanctuaries afford evidence of the frequency with which suppliants obtain the cure there.

A visit to some place of pilgrimage leads many to a complete amendment of life. On his way to a shrine the pilgrim forgets his worldly cares and is more diligent in prayer. Pilgrimages are works of penance, as they are fatiguing and often expensive. They are also a public profession of faith. Many graces are obtained by devout pilgrims.

The people of Brittany are considered the most faithful followers of St. Anne. Their most renowned place of pilgrimage is St. Anne d'Auray, who is the patroness of the sailors; Brittany being in a special manner the country of sea-faring men.

The feast of St. Anne, which is on the twenty-sixth of July, is introduced by a visit to the famous shrine. The faithful remain there all night, passing the hours with songs and prayers.

On the feast itself a Pontifical High Mass is said.

The celebration closes with a magnificent torch-light procession. The following morning the people return to their homes in the same quiet manner in which they came. In every Breton you find a picture of St. Anne, always given the first place on the wall after that of the Holy Family.

In America, too, the devotion has its fervent clients. The yearly pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré in Canada has become known all over the United States, for, it is a shrine where many favors have been granted.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

*LITURGY OF THE FEASTS OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN*

WE need not be surprised that since the origin of Christianity the worship of Mary has held a high place in the piety of the faithful, and especially of women. We see it everywhere associated with the worship of the Saviour. Jesus has His temples, Mary has hers; Jesus has His servants, Mary has hers; Jesus has his festivals, Mary has hers. That of the Annunciation, celebrated in a few places in Apostolic times, is now kept in every Catholic church throughout the world.

In Mary, God honored woman. It is for woman, in her turn, to keep the place that Christianity has given her. The more she shows herself like Mary, the more will she secure affection, respect, power, freedom, and happiness for herself. We must admire that instinct which leads girls to be devout to Mary. When we see them in their white dresses gathered around an altar of Mary, we are inclined

to say to them, *"If you knew the gift of God!"* If you knew how much you owe to Mary, oh, how much you would wish to be like her, and how quickly you would run in her footsteps, in imitation of her virtues! Girls, do not forget, that your devotion to Mary is your safeguard, liberty, honor, regard, life.

The chief feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary are the following:

1. The feast of the Immaculate Conception, on the 8th of December. Christian tradition declares that she who was to bring forth the Saviour was free from every stain of original sin. Even from the first moment of her conception. This perfect exemption of Mary from original sin we celebrate on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

2. The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, celebrated on the 8th of September. It is a special distinction of the Blessed Virgin that we commemorate the day of her nativity. Unlike the other Saints, who are commemorated on the day of their death because that was their birth to a better life, the day of Mary's birth is solemnized because she was born without sin.

3. The feast of the Holy Name of Mary. We love to hear the names of those who are dear to us; how, then, could we be indifferent to the name Mary, with which we delight to address the Mother of God?

4. The feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, on the 21st of November. When Mary was three years old, her parents brought her to Jerusalem and dedicated her to the service of the Most High in the Temple.

5. The feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, on the 25th of March. This feast recalls the precious moment when Mary, overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, conceived the Only-begotten of the Father, to clothe Him with our humanity. Good Christians seek to call to mind the mystery of the Incarnation repeatedly every day; the "Angelus Bell," rung morning, noon and evening, helps them to do so.

6. The feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, on the 2nd of July. This commemorates Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth. In our daily prayers we repeat the words with which Elizabeth saluted Mary.

7. The feast of the Expectation of the Blessed Virgin on the 18th of December. It is celebrated a few days before Christmas to remind us that the birth of the Saviour is nigh.

8. The feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, on the 2nd of February. The intention of the feast is to bring to our minds the Blessed Virgin's coming to the Temple, to make the offering required by the Mosaic Law.

9. The feast of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed

Virgin, commemorated on the Friday of Passion week. In contemplating the sufferings of Christ, the Church could not overlook the sufferings of His holy Mother.

10. The feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, celebrated on the 15th of August. Having shown to Mary our compassion in her sorrows, it is meet that we should also take part in her joy and glory.

11. The feast of the Holy Rosary is kept on the first Sunday in October, because a great victory was won by the Christians over the Turks on the first Sunday of this month.

The devotion of the rosary consists in reciting the Our Father fifteen times and the Hail Mary a hundred and fifty times, in honor of the fifteen principal mysteries of our Saviour and His Mother.

The five joyful mysteries: the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin; the Visitation; the Nativity of Our Lord; the Presentation in the Temple; the Finding of Jesus in the Temple.

The five sorrowful mysteries: the Agony of Jesus in the Garden; His Scourging at the Pillar; His Crowning with Thorns; His Carrying of the Cross; the Crucifixion.

The five glorious mysteries; the Resurrection of Our Lord; His Ascension into Heaven; the Descent of the Holy Ghost; the Assumption of the Blessed

Virgin; the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin in Heaven.

We should dwell upon each mystery as we recite the Rosary.

This was what St. Dominic did; he taught the people to reflect while praying. The success of the preaching of the Rosary was so rapid that it surpassed all hopes and astonished Rome itself. People pressed round the pulpit to hear an explanation of the mysteries. They kissed the chaplet, watered it with tears, and interrupted the recital with their sobs. The churches could not hold the congregations.

On the Feast of the Assumption, in 1233, seven Florentine nobles met together, as was their custom, to recite the Office of the Blessed Virgin. While they were thus engaged, Mary herself appeared before them and bade them forsake the world for a more perfect life. At once, like the Christians of old, they sold their goods, gave the money to the poor, and changed their senatorial robes for the simple habits of religious. "See the servants of the Madonna," cried a child at its mother's breast as they entered the city: the name was accepted as a token of the will of Heaven, and from that time they and their spiritual children have been known as Servites, or Servants of Mary.

One of these Seven Founders was Alexis Falconieri, the propagator of the devotion of the Seven Dolours of Our Lady. He was with difficulty prevailed upon to receive ordination, and in religion always sought out the humblest offices. To him Our Lady presented the black habit which the Servites wear in honor of the Passion of her Son. Every day of his life Alexis repeated a hundred "Aves" to the Immaculate Mother of God; and it was at the end of the hundredth "*Ave*" that he expired.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

*LITURGY OF THE BLESSING OF
CHURCH BELLS*

THE use of bells is very ancient in the Church; it certainly goes back to the eighth century. During the first three centuries, the Christians, obliged to hide from persecution, had no public sign for summoning them to the Holy Offices. It is probable that they gave notice to one another privately, or that in their meetings the day and the hour of the next meeting were announced. When under Constantine peace was given to the Church and vast basilicas were constructed, there was undoubtedly a public signal for summoning the faithful together. The general opinion is that it was the sound of thin boards struck with mallets, or else of large wooden clappers, like those still used on the last three days of Holy Week.

In some monasteries trumpets were used. At length the use of bells became general throughout the West, and gradually passed over to the East. When bells were invented, it became necessary to build high towers that their sound might be heard

afar off. On most of these towers there was placed a little pyramid surmounted by a globe, in which was fastened a cross. On the cross was put a cock, a popular emblem connected with the use of bells in the Church. To the pastors it recalled vigilance; to the faithful, zeal for prayer and readiness for work.

The Church blesses the bells as she blesses everything else used in her worship. This blessing is called "Baptism." She wishes to render mysterious and holy both the instrument and the sound which shall summon the faithful to all that is most sacred under heaven,—the Word of God, Holy Mass, assistance at, and participation in, the holy mysteries.

The object of the bells is expressed in an old Latin verse, which reads in English: *"I praise God, call the people, convoke the clergy, mourn the dead, dispel the clouds, and announce the feasts."*

The first object, then, of the bells is to announce the glory of God; hence the faithful are invited, by the ringing of the bell, to adore the Blessed Sacrament, at the moment of the Elevation or Benediction, or when the Blessed Sacrament is carried to the sick. They serve, secondly, to convoke the people and the clergy for the celebration of Holy Mass and other devotions. They, thirdly, remind us to pray for the departed; bells are tolled

at the death of a Catholic and at his burial. The Church, fourthly, prays at the blessing of the bells that through them the faithful may be preserved from injury by storms and tempests. Finally, the bells serve to announce the feasts of God and His Saints. Because the bells are destined for these different purposes, they are, in accordance with the direction of the Church, solemnly blessed.

The bells are washed and cleansed with holy water, both inside and outside. This is to express the wish that the bell might be a clean instrument of a pure and holy religion. It also reminds us that, as the sound of this inanimate bell is to go forth to praise God from sanctified metal, so must the prayers of the Christian come from pure hearts and clean lips. The sacred bell teaches us to purify ourselves by penance before we presume to open our lips in the praise of God, just as the bell is first washed and cleansed before it is used in the service of God. The bell is, moreover, anointed with oil and chrism. The oil signifies the power of the Holy Ghost, but in this unction the Church has in view the faithful themselves. The psalms and prayers recited by the clergy implore the Almighty that, as often as we make use of these bells, He would be mindful of the precious merits of His Divine Son; also, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, He would dissipate hurtful storms and banish the spirit of sloth from the faithful; and that

He would shorten the time of suffering for the souls of the faithful departed, whenever the living send up their prayers for them.

Besides the first unction, the new bell is anointed seven times more on the outside with oil, and four times on the inside with chrism. This sevenfold unction may have reference to the words of the royal Prophet: *"Seven times a day I give praise to Thee, O Lord!"*

The fourfold unction of the interior of the bell with chrism may be said to denote that the sound of the bell is to go forth to the four points of the compass and to remind Jew and Gentile of the name of Christ, of His teachings, and the holy mysteries of His holy religion, which are preached and celebrated in the Christian Temple.

The name of a saint is also given to each bell. It is done to place the bell, as well as the church, under the direct protection of the Saints. Whenever we hear a bell, we may picture to ourselves that the Saint after whom the bell is named calls us to the service and praise of God. So-called sponsors are present at the blessing of the bells, but their function is only that of witnesses to the ceremony.

Finally, a vessel of burning incense is placed beneath the bell. This is to symbolize the devout prayers to which the new bell is to assemble the faithful.

To conclude the whole ceremony, the deacon sings the Gospel taken from the tenth chapter of St. Luke, in which it is related that Martha received the Saviour into her house. This Gospel is read because to the newly-blessed bell a place is now assigned in the House of God. It reminds us that at the call of the bell we should appear in the House of God and present ourselves at His Sacred Banquet with the same eagerness with which these devout sisters, Martha and Mary, received the Redeemer at their table, to be fed by Him with the Bread of Eternal Life.

A bell rings three times a day, morning, noon, and night in honor of the Mother of God. This bell is called the "Angelus Bell." At first the bell was rung only twice a day, half an hour before sunrise and half an hour after sunset, to call upon the faithful to pray to God for the success of the Crusaders. The midday bell was added about three centuries later. The custom of ringing the bell three times, at intervals of about a minute, was introduced later by the order of the Holy See, and the devotion was enriched with indulgences. In some places, after the evening "Angelus," the bell sounds again to admonish the faithful to pray for the souls in Purgatory.

St. Jane of Valois, daughter of Louis XI, King of France, had been banished from the royal pal-

ace. At the age of five the neglected child offered her whole heart to God and yearned to do some special service in honor of His Blessed Mother. Having attained womanhood, she retired to Bourges, and there realized a long-harbored desire by founding the Order of the Annunciation of the Mother of God. The nuns wear a black veil, a white cloak, a red scapular, and a brown habit with a cross, and a cord for a girdle.

During the lifetime of St. Jane the Angelus was established in France. The sound of the "*Ave*" thrice each day gave her hope in her sorrow, and fostered in her the desire still further to honor the Incarnation. How often might we derive grace from that same beautiful devotion, so enriched by the Church, yet neglected by so many Christians!

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

*LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT OF
EXTREME UNCTION*

THIS Sacrament is called Extreme Unction because it is the last anointing which the Catholic receives. At Baptism his breast and shoulders were anointed with the oil of the Catechumens and his head with holy Chrism. At Confirmation he was marked on the forehead with Chrism to show that his faith must be manifested to the world. And now that he is about to cross the threshold of eternity, his various senses receive a last anointing in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

The oil which is used for this Sacrament is olive oil, consecrated by a bishop on Holy Thursday of each year. It is known as the Oil of the Sick, and it is applied by the priest to the principal organs of the body through which sin may have come upon the soul.

The ancients used oil as a medicine, a food, a source of light, and especially as a means of producing that strength and flexibility of the muscles which athletes seek to acquire. The Church

anoints her children with sacramental oil to give them spiritual strength in their conflict with Satan.

The priest, on entering the chamber of the sick person, who ought to be in full possession of his mental faculties, greets him by saying: "*Peace be to this house, and to all who dwell therein.*" The peace which the priest wishes to the sick person and to all the inmates of the house, is threefold: first, peace with God, which consists in submitting perfectly to His holy Will. What better and more desirable benefit could the priest wish to the sick persons? Secondly, peace with our neighbor. Those who dwell together in one house ought to live in peace with one another and nurse the sick person, who perhaps causes them much trouble and pain. Third, peace with himself, which consists in a good conscience. The sick man needs this peace, that he may live peacefully and die happily.

The priest now puts the vessel containing the oil upon the table and, being vested in surplice and violet-colored stole, approaches the sick person and offers him a crucifix to be piously kissed. The crucifix reminds the sick person that he is a Christian, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and that he therefore may hope to be saved.

Then the priest sprinkles the sick person, the room, and the bystanders with holy water, saying: "*Thou shalt sprinkle with hyssop, and I shall be*

cleansed." This sprinkling is for the sick man and those present an admonition to penance. The chamber is sprinkled with holy water, that the evil spirit may be kept away.

After this the priest comforts the sick person, and if he wishes to confess, hears his confession and absolves him. This is followed by the general absolution, the sick person having prayed for mercy and pardon, and asked for life everlasting.

While Extreme Unction is being administered, the bystanders should say the Litany of the Saints and other prayers. The sick person needs prayer very much. The priest makes the sign of the cross over the sick person and says a very long prayer, invoking the Holy Trinity, all the holy Angels, Archangels, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and all the Saints. The sign of the cross serves the sick as a shield against the attacks of Satan.

The priest lays his hand on the sick person in order to implore for him power and grace; he places him under the protection of the Angels and the Saints, that they may defend him against the assaults of the devil and obtain God's grace for him.

Now the priest administers the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Anointing the patient with holy oil on the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the hands, and feet, he says: "*Through*

this holy unction, and through His most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by seeing—hearing—smelling—taste and speech—touch—and walking, Amen.”

All the senses of man, vitiated by the devil, are thus purified and sanctified. The sign of the cross, which the priest makes on each of them, is like a seal with which he closes them against the enemy and marks them in the name of God. Fearlessly may the Christian soldier die who bears thus on all his members the sign that is victorious over the devil, the world, and the powers of darkness.

The chamber of the sick person should be decent; the bed should have a white coverlet, out of respect for the Sacrament. A table should be prepared in a convenient place and covered with a white cloth. On this table should be set a crucifix, two candlesticks with lighted tapers, holy water with a sprinkling brush, a plate containing seven or eight little balls of cotton for wiping away the unctions, some crumbs of bread for cleansing the priest's fingers, a pitcher of water with a white towel, and a basin to receive the water and the crumbs when the priest washes his hands.

St. Barbara is known by the miraculous protection she has at all times shown to her devout clients. She is called the patroness of a happy death, because she obtains for her followers the blessing

of the Sacraments at the last hour. On this account, although a woman, she is often represented in art with a chalice and the Sacred Host in her hand. St. Stanislaus Kostka was brought Holy Communion by Angels through invoking her name; and Surius tells the story of a young man in Holland who, in 1448, awoke suddenly at night to find himself enveloped in flames. In agony of mind and body he called upon St. Barbara, who appeared in answer to his prayer, threw her mantle around the scorched youth, and kept life and strength within him till he had received the Viaticum and last anointing, when he tranquilly expired.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

*LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT OF
PENANCE*

WHEN the priest hears confession in church, he is vested in a white surplice, denoting innocence, and a violet-colored stole which signifies the unhappy state to which sin has reduced man. When he hears confession elsewhere than in church he wears only the stole. Regulars generally hear confession in the habit of their Order with or without a stole. Surplice and stole are priestly garments, and as the administration of the Sacrament of Penance belongs only to priests, the ecclesiastical ordinance to hear confessions with surplice is well grounded. In case of necessity every priest can hear confessions without surplice or stole. The stole of purple or violet color also signifies the penitential sorrow which is required for the worthy reception of the Sacrament, and it is an admonition to us to excite ourselves to a sincere contrition in all our confessions.

The place where confessions are generally heard is called "Confessional." In every parish church

there usually are as many confessionals as there are priests engaged in the care of souls. In the primitive ages of Christianity it seems confessions were heard in the vestibule or in the side chapels of the church. From the fourteenth century on a chair was placed for the confessor in a chapel attached to the church; to the right of his chair was fixed a partition with a grating, below which was a bench, on which the penitent knelt. It was in these confessionals that women were heard; the men generally confessed in the sacristy. The present style of confessional was first introduced in the seventeenth century.

The priest hears confession in a sitting posture. Judges always pronounce sentence seated. Pilate sat when he condemned Jesus to death. The priest sits because when in the confessional he binds and looses, *i. e.*, performs a judicial act. To his office as judge it is also becoming to cover his head; though this is not an express ordinance of the Church.

The penitent must neither sit nor stand, but kneel, unless prevented by some physical ailment. The kneeling posture is the only appropriate one for a sinner who begs for mercy and pardon with an humble and contrite heart. It was thus that Mary Magdalen prostrated herself at the feet of Jesus when she came to Him to obtain the forgiveness of her sins.

The sinner's accusation is ready. He approaches the sacred tribunal. To animate his confidence, he makes the sign of the cross and recalls in his heart that the Son of God died for his sins. Then, addressing himself to the minister of God, he says, "*Bless me Father, for I have sinned!*" He is guilty, and because he is guilty he asks a blessing.

He calls the priest "Father." Perhaps it was he who gave him the life of grace on the day of Baptism and who first nourished his life with the Bread of Angels. Moved by the petition of his child, the priest makes the sign of the cross over him, saying: "*May the Lord be in thy heart and on thy lips, that thou mayest make a sincere and full confession of thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*"

The penitent begins by complying with an obligation as old as the world. He makes a confession which Adam, the first of all the guilty made. He confesses to God: "*I confess to Almighty God.*" He does not confine himself to this. The Angels and Saints have known his disorders, which he acknowledged to them to excite their compassion and increase his own humiliation. He names her who is most amiable, pure, and merciful,—the Blessed Virgin Mary; the one that is most terrible to the devil,—the Archangel Michael; the one that is most holy among men,—St. John the Baptist, whose sanctity he hopes may outweigh his own

iniquity; persons most mighty on earth,—Sts. Peter and Paul, invested with the power to bind and to loose consciences; in fine, all the Saints, his friends and brethren.

After invoking the Church in Heaven, he invokes the Church on earth, represented by the priest, and says, “*and to you also Father, I confess in thought word and deed,—there is nothing in me but has been the slave of iniquity.*”

Then the penitent, as if to show the priest that he has not exaggerated in saying that he has offended God by thought, word, or deed, enters into a detailed account of his faults.

When the confession is ended, the sinner strikes his breast and says: “*Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.*”

Crushed by the weight of his shame, he calls upon Heaven: “*Therefore, I beseech the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, etc.*” He does not dare to address himself directly to God, but implores all the Saints in Heaven and on earth, the witnesses of his crimes and miseries, to become his intercessors with that God whom he has so basely offended. He also addresses himself to the “Father,” the priest. This sincere friend hears the voice of the penitent child. With all the fervor of his love he says: “*May the Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to life everlasting, Amen.*” Lest this prayer should not suffice to

reassure the culprit, he adds another: "*May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, absolution, and remission of all your sins, Amen.*"

The priest next imposes a penance, very trifling in comparison with the faults of the penitent. Invoking God, whose place he holds, he raises his hand and pronounces the words of absolution: "*Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee; and I, by His authority, absolve thee from every bond of excommunication, suspension, interdict, so far as I have power and thou standest in need.*"

Happy in having brought back an erring sheep to the divine Shepherd, the priest, to secure its perseverance, calls down upon it a strengthening blessing from on high. He says: "*May the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the Saints in general, all the good that you do, and all the evil that you endure, serve to obtain for you the remission of your sins, to increase divine grace in you, and to merit for you an everlasting reward. Amen.*"

The priest ends with a blessing; then the penitent withdraws.

St. Andrew Corsini is the model of a true penitent who, while firmly trusting in God's forgiveness, never forgives himself. St. Andrew, who belonged to one of the noblest families in Florence, fell into every kind of sin in his youth. Yet he

had been born in answer to prayers, and his mother never ceased to implore God's mercy on his soul. One day, when he had shown unusual insolence, she reproached him with the sorrow he had caused her, and told him how she had longed for his birth and had vowed him to God and our Lady, before his birth. She had a dream that she brought forth a wolf; that this wolf rushed into a church, and was there transformed into a lamb. Thus did God vouchsafe to provide at once consolation for the mother and conversion for the son. For hearing of this dream, Andrew was moved to enter a church and seek aid in prayer; and tender contrition wrought a change and transformed the wolf into a lamb. Kneeling before her to whom he had been consecrated before birth, he obtained the grace to break with the world and sin, and to enter the Order of Mount Carmel.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS

WE read that Christ said to the rich young man: "Come and follow Me";—"Come and let your conduct be guided by Me completely." This is perfect obedience. When He was speaking about marriage, He said that there were some who remained unmarried for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, and added: "He that can take it, let him take it." By these words He counseled perpetual chastity. Finally, He said to the young man: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give it to the poor." This was voluntary poverty. Our Lord Himself practiced these counsels, for He sought not His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him, and led a life of celibacy and extreme poverty.

The members of Religious Orders are bound to follow the Evangelical Counsels. As a servant has to serve his master by reason of the duties he has taken upon himself, so the Religious is bound by his vows to strive after the highest perfection by following the counsels.

In the early days of monastic life, all the monks were pious laymen who lived under the discipline and supervision of a common superior. Voluntary poverty and obedience, rigid fasts and works of penance, daily manual labor, prayer and psalm-singing, vigils, reading and meditation of the Scriptures, strict silence, and absolute retirement from the world,—these were their objects and occupations, and they lived together in a regulated community, engaged solely with the salvation of their souls. In this respect the monks were but pious Christians. They attended divine worship with the rest of the faithful, received the Sacraments with them, and were in no way exteriorly distinguished from them. Gradually permission was granted to one or more of their number to become priests, so that these might conduct divine worship for the others in the monasteries. In the course of time they were also allowed to hold religious worship for the people, to administer the Sacrament of Penance, and some were even entrusted with parochial work.

Strictly speaking, there existed monks before the advent of Christianity. Elias and Eliseus, together with their disciples, lived in seclusion and were engaged in the study of the Divine Law. The monks of the early days of Christianity lived in the seclusion of some forest or desert. They placed themselves under the guidance of a de-

vout hermit. In the midst of their cells they constructed a church for divine worship. St. Antony, who dwelled in the desert of Upper Egypt, had five thousand disciples. The hermits led a life of extreme austerity; herbs of the earth were their only food, and water their only drink. Their time was devoted to silent prayer, meditation on the Scriptures, and manual labor. They made baskets, mats, and other articles from cane and palm leaves. These articles were sold, and the proceeds furnished them with the few things they needed. This mode of life was possible only in a mild climate. In the West the monks dwelled together in large houses, called monasteries. The little room a monk occupied was called a cell. The head of a community was called the superior. He had to promote the spiritual welfare of those entrusted to him.

The Ten Commandments must be observed by every Christian. Those who strive to do better and become more perfect, follow the *Evangelical Counsels*: voluntary poverty for the sake of God; perpetual chastity, and obedience, or giving up one's own will to follow the will of God in the person of a superior. The Saviour called those blessed who love and endure poverty for His sake. He praised those great souls who, for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, persevere in virginal continence. Christ counsels obedience and denial of

self-will. He himself practiced this obedience towards His Heavenly Father "*unto death, even unto the death of the cross,*" and He also showed obedience to His foster-father, a poor and humble carpenter.

The spiritual welfare of mankind was greatly promoted by the Religious Orders, each in its own way. The Order of St. Benedict and those that followed, established the Christian religion all over Europe and transformed rude and barbarous tribes into civilized peoples. Wherever they founded monasteries, the monks cultivated the waste lands, drained marshes, constructed roads, built bridges, and so forth. In Germany they put lands under cultivation, made agriculture flourish, and changed the abode of savage beasts into populous cities. Italy, France, Spain, and England are also deeply indebted to them. Besides these services rendered to society, the members of the Religious Orders conferred great benefits upon letters and science. They established schools in connection with their monasteries.

The lowly poverty and the austere life of the Order of St. Francis of Assisi admonished men not to give themselves up to the pleasures of the world. The monks were zealous and efficient aids to the parochial clergy, and as guides and directors in the tribunal of penance were and still are held in the highest esteem.

The Order of St. Dominic, made it its special object to preach the Gospel to infidels and sinners, and the efforts of the Friars Preachers, have ever been attended with the greatest success.

The Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits, appeared at the time when the bane of heresy menaced the whole of Christendom. They confirmed the faithful and defended the true doctrine and carried the light of the Gospel to the heathen and idolaters.

St. Alphonsus de'Liguori founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, whose members were to become auxiliaries to the pastoral clergy. They labor in the pulpit and in the confessional, give retreats and missions for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of souls.

Other Orders and Congregations were established to nurse the sick in hospitals and to redeem Christian prisoners groaning in the slavery of the infidel Turks.

The numerous Orders of religious women proposed for themselves the instruction of youth, the care of the orphans, and the alleviation of human suffering and misery. They instruct the ignorant, feed and clothe the poor, visit and care for the sick, provide for helpless infants and orphans, succor the aged, harbor and reform the fallen. They are angels of mercy, messengers of divine chastity, who vary the field of their zeal according to the needs of mankind. They live but for their fellow-

creatures, fear not the contagion of the pesthouse, or the perils of the battlefield, nor shrink from the horrors of the gallows. Their life of virtue and self-forgiveness exacts the approval and admiration even of infidels.

Confraternities are unions which propose to themselves the furthering of some particular devotion,—to the Blessed Sacrament, or the Sacred Heart of Jesus, or the Blessed Virgin Mary. Or their object may be a work of Christian charity; for instance, the relief of the poor, which is the object of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, or visiting or comforting the sick, burying the dead, etc.

What would the Catholic Church be—what would condition throughout the world be to-day, were it not for the zealous labors of these saintly men and women, who have given up all to follow Christ?

Saint Pacificus teaches us to perfect ourselves by the exact fulfilment of our individual duties. The vocation of St. Pacificus was foreshadowed in his early infancy, when he used to clothe himself in rags, declaring that he intended to be a Franciscan. At an early age he was consigned to the care of his uncle, a priest, who treated him with great sternness. This severity, however, rapidly matured his virtues, and while still a boy, his reputation for holiness became so great that his mere presence was

a check on sinful words and deeds. When he was old enough he entered the Order of St. Francis at his native place, San Severino. As soon as he was ordained to the priesthood, he travelled about the country, preaching and administering the Sacraments, and devoted his life to gaining souls for God.

While traversing the country and converting souls, the sole theme of his discourses and exhortations was fidelity to the daily duties of life, whether in or out of the world. During his whole life in religion he was never known to infringe any precept either of poverty or obedience. His great perfection lay in doing perfectly the work, humble though it might be, which was assigned to him.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

LITURGY OF THE BLESSING OF
CEMETERIES

THE word *cemetery* means a place to sleep. It was Christianity that first gave this significant name to the place where the deceased rest. In the eyes of the Catholic Church death is only a sleep and the place in which they rest is a dormitory. Now sleep necessarily supposes an awakening. This expresses a most consoling doctrine for the good and a most terrible one for the wicked,—the dogma of the Resurrection.

The Church always showed the greatest respect for the mortal remains of her children. This respect for the dead is a lesson that teaches the living to respect themselves. The Catholic Church introduced practices much more conformable to reason than those in vogue among the pagans, and much more likely to promote a tender remembrance of the deceased. She began to bury the dead and thus realised the prediction made to sinful man: "*Thou art dust, and thou shalt return into dust, from which thou was taken.*" She de-

sired that the dead should be assembled into one place near her temple, so that she might watch over bygone generations as a mother watches over the cradles of her sleeping children.

In a small space we meet three Churches—the Church of Heaven, the Church on earth, and the Church in Purgatory. In the churchyard you see a great brotherhood. The Church of Heaven, consisting of Angels and blessed souls, whose pictures, hanging on the walls, recall their victories and their invisible presence—the Church of Heaven gathered around this altar, the tomb of a martyr or a saint, on which is immolated the God whom the just contemplate face to face, and whom we adore under the Eucharistic veils. The Church on earth appears to our eyes in a multitude of men, women, and children praying together. The Church in Purgatory also has its place; it consists of our friends and relations, whose voices seem to come up from the graves on which we pray, calling to us with holy Job: *“Have pity on us, have pity on us, at least you, our friends.”*

Cemeteries are blessed. This usage goes back to the very birth of Christianity. Religion, which so often blesses man, his fields, his meadows, his food, his cattle, his house, to teach him that he is holy, since everything around him must be holy in order to come in contact with him,—religion also blesses and consecrates the place of his burial, so

as to remind him that death does not divest him of his holiness, and he continues worthy of respect in the grave.

This blessing of our last resting-place is a source of many useful lessons for the living. Let us consider them.

To make a cemetery more venerable, the blessing of it is reserved to the bishop, though he can delegate the power to a priest. On the eve of the ceremony five wooden crosses, the height of a man, are set up; the first in the middle, higher than the others; the others before, behind, to the right and to the left at the ends of the cemetery. In front of each cross rises a wooden stake, two feet high, with three wooden candle-holders at the end.

These wooden crosses, placed at the four cardinal points, represent the Saviour of the world,—Him who is *the resurrection and the life* of the whole human race. The stakes of whitish color are an image of man, who by death becomes like dry and useless wood. The night following the erection of the crosses recalls the darkness of the tomb, as the ceremony of the next day is a bright picture of the Resurrection. The cross standing before these stakes declares aloud that Jesus Christ protects even the remains of man in the tomb, that He keeps the dead under His hand, and that He will restore them to life at the appointed time.

The next day, the bishop, wearing a surplice,

stole, and white cope, goes to the cemetery. White is used because the ceremony is to be a joyful one, proclaiming a consoling mystery. Preceded by the clergy, the bishop advances and takes his place before the cross in the middle. Fifteen candles are lighted, three on each of the stakes before the crosses.

The lighted candles placed on the lifeless wood are an image of man awaiting the Resurrection in the tomb. Their number indicates and proclaims to the four corners of the world the Blessed Trinity, in whose name and by whose power the resurrection shall be effected. The prayer that the bishop recites immediately afterward reveals the spirit of these beautiful ceremonies: *"O Almighty and merciful God, who art the guardian of souls, the anchor of salvation, and the hope of the faithful, graciously hear our humble prayer, and vouchsafe to purify this place by Thy heavenly blessing, and to make it holy, so that the bodies which will rest here may, after the course of this life, deserve, on the great Day of Judgment, a blessed immortality and a share in eternal happiness with the just souls, through Jesus Christ, Amen."*

After this prayer the clergy and the faithful kneel down before the cross, and beseech all our brethren in Heaven to join their supplications with ours. The Litany of the Saints is sung. When this is over, the celebrant walks around the ceme-

tery, which he sprinkles with holy water, pronouncing the words: "*Sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed.*" During this ceremony the choir sings the Psalm *Miserere*. It is a long lamentation, a cry of mercy capable of touching the heart of God.

The bishop returns to his place before the cross: it is here indeed, that it becomes him to pray. He recites the following prayer: "*O God, who art the Creator of the universe, the Redeemer of the human race, and the Dispenser of all creatures, visible and invisible, we ask Thee suppliantly to vouchsafe to purify, bless, and sanctify the cemetery, wherein, the bodies of Thy faithful are to rest after this life. Give eternal comfort to their bodies, which will rest here, awaiting the sound of the trumpet of Thine Archangel, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen.*"

These last words, by which the bishop proclaims the Resurrection to come, are immediately followed by a ceremony that is a striking image of it. He takes the lighted candles from the stake and places them on the three ends of the cross, beginning with that of the middle. This act says to man: "*The hope of resurrection, which goes down with thee into the grave, will be realized by Jesus Christ.*" The stake is then removed; but the cross remains erect, to say to all generations: "*You shall rise again. Your Redeemer lives.*" The

bishop finally salutes the cross and incenses it three times, after which he retires.

Early in the third century Callistus, then a deacon, was instructed by Pope St. Zephyrin with the rule of the clergy and set over the cemeteries at Rome. His name is best known in connection with the old cemetery on the Appian Way, which was enlarged and adorned by him, and is called to this day the Catacomb of St. Callistus.

In the first ages of the Church the faithful buried their dead with feet turned towards the rising sun as a symbol of the resurrection. St. Bede describes the sepulchre of Christ and says that He was interred with His sacred feet towards the East. From His sepulture Christians have made this their common rule in their burials, so that, on the last day, they might arise, facing the rising sun as an emblem of the Resurrection.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LITURGY OF PROCESSIONS

A PROCESSION is a solemn, religious march of clergy and people. It is also one of the rites of the Catholic Church dating to the most remote antiquity.

Who has not read in the Scriptures the account of the magnificent procession which King David made with all his court to remove the Ark of the Covenant from the house of Abinadab to that of Obbedom? Who is not aware of the still more magnificent procession in which Solomon, accompanied by all the people of Israel, removed the Ark to the Temple of Jerusalem? Do we not annually, on Palm Sunday, participate in a function which recalls that solemn procession which led the Son of God Himself, amid the applause of the people, into Jerusalem and the Temple?

All Christian ages had processions. In the sixth century, when a plague was desolating Rome, Pope St. Gregory the Great ordered the celebrated procession which, by reason of the seven companies of the faithful who composed it, retained the name

septiform. It was scarcely over when the plague ceased; not a single new case occurred, and all the sick recovered. In the sixteenth century Milan was attacked by a plague. The great Archbishop of that city, St. Charles Borromeo, organized a solemn procession. He himself appeared therein, barefooted and with a rope round his neck, to obtain an end of the terrible scourge. His prayer was heard.

The antiquity and universality of processions show that they are of divine institution. Where else could man have gotten the idea that a solemn march could honor and appease the Deity? The first processions of the Church took place in the catacombs, and others were held there until they could be held in broad daylight.

Processions are a public prayer and present a wholesome instruction. It is of faith that common prayer has special efficacy. "*Where two or three are gathered together in My name,*" says Our Lord, "*there I am in the midst of them.*" Moreover a procession is a prayer accompanied by the ringing of bells, by singing, by the bursts of musical instruments,—conditions indicated by God Himself. In the Book of Numbers we read how God commanded the Israelites to blow their trumpets when they went to war and also in days of rejoicing to accompany their banquets and sacrifices with instrumental music. Hence it comes that all

peoples, at all times, have accompanied their religious solemnities with vocal and instrumental music. When we see multitudes of people bearing aloft in triumph the venerated images of the Saviour, of His Blessed Mother, or of some Saint; when we see them walking thus along the streets of the city or the country roads, praying, singing, or weeping, what does it mean but that they are full of confidence in God?

There are two processions: the Christian procession, headed by Jesus Christ, who, with the banner of His Cross is the Guide to Heaven; and the worldly procession, with its standard born by the devil, who leads men to hell.

The following processions form part of the ritual of the Church everywhere:

1. The procession on the Feast of Purification. Lighted tapers are carried around the church because on that day the aged Simeon declared the Child Jesus to be a "*light to the revelation of the Gentiles.*" The wax tapers are emblematic of Christ, the Light of the world. The wax betokens His manhood, the flame His Godhead.

2. The Palm Sunday Procession—Blessed palms are carried around the church in memory of Our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The palm branches borne by the Jews were symbols of the victory that Christ was to gain by His death over the devil, the prince of this world. Our proces-

sion is significant of the Christian's ultimate triumphal entry into Heaven.

3. The Holy Saturday procession. The Blessed Sacrament is taken from the place where it was deposited, and borne by the priest back to the high altar. This procession is significant of our future resurrection. The ceremony should by right take place at daybreak on Easter Day, but as few could then be present, it is anticipated on the eve of the feast.

4. The Corpus Christi procession. The Blessed Eucharist is carried to one or more altars to testify publicly our faith in the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar. The Festival of Corpus Christi (*i. e.*, Body of Christ) is kept on the Thursday following Trinity Sunday, consequently in the second week after Pentecost, because soon after the descent of the Holy Ghost the Apostles began to dispense Holy Communion to the faithful.

5. The procession on St. Mark's Day. In Catholic countries the priest goes out to bless the fields and petitions God to grant the fruits of the earth in due season. St. Mark is commemorated on the twenty-fifth of April. The procession on this day owes its origin to Pope St. Gregory the Great, who ordered it for the purpose of imploring God's mercy to avert a plague.

6. The procession of the three Rogation Days.

The object of this liturgical function is to ask of God the blessing of an abundant harvest. The Rogation Days are the three days preceding the Ascension of Our Lord.

Nowhere on earth are there so many Masses celebrated or so many processions of the Blessed Sacrament as at the famous shrine dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary at Lourdes in France. Here the Eucharistic Lord passing through the crowds scatters His favors to honor His Mother.

In the month of August, 1888, fifteen thousand pilgrims were seen praying before the grotto day and night, but in spite of their great devotion none of the sick seemed to be healed; then they began to pray in a body with outstretched arms, but without any success. A holy priest, however, conceived the idea of carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession among the rows of sick: a procession in which more than five hundred clergymen carried lighted tapers.

The infirm stretched on couches, raised their hands imploringly to Our Lord as He passed in His triumphal march. Piteous appeals, like: "Jesus, if it be Your wish, You can help me," were heard all over. United by the bonds of charity in their dire need, with one voice, the assembled multitude sent up to heaven their pathetic supplica-

tion: "Lord, help us lest we perish! Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us! Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

And lo, Jesus, passing by, beheld the suffering of His children, for many of the sick arose from their beds of pain, and with joyous acclamation joined the procession.

Since that occasion the procession is repeated yearly, the people making invocations and the sick returning home cured.

The Church holds processions either for the purpose of setting before us more forcibly certain events in the life of Christ, certain doctrines of the faith, or in order to obtain speedy help from God; on these occasions an opportunity is afforded us of testifying in a public manner our faith and our loyalty to the Church.

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